



PASIG CITY, PHILIPPINES

ACTION: WHAT MAKES PASIG CITY AMBITIOUS IN ITS CLIMATE ACTION CONTEXT?

This case study series features key findings from the 4.5-year-long Ambitious City Promises Project (ACP) that co-created climate action policies in Southeast Asian megacities with local stakeholders. Three core principles guided ACP's efforts: Inclusion, Exchange, and Action. This case study encapsulates Pasig City's ambitious climate actions towards becoming *"a model community of empowered citizens with high*

quality of life." It details the formulation process for the Promise of Pasig – the city's climate declaration – as well as implementation mechanisms and paths forward to successfully deliver the sector-specific goals aggregated within the Promise of Pasig. This commitment has now been formally integrated into Pasig City's climate action policies.

Pasig City: *Umaagos ang pag-asa* (Flowing with hope)

Pasig City is one of the oldest and most prosperous cities of the sixteen cities in Metro Manila. The economically-dynamic city is a catalyst of change within its own boundaries and across the entire metropolitan region. Pasig has been aggressively mobilizing its resources to spearhead sustainability initiatives and to bring fellow municipalities on board. It has been recognized for its sustainable transport program and serves as a model liveable city, having won the Galing Pook Awards for Outstanding Local Government Program (2017) and LGU Eco Champion National Awards (2015), to name a few. Pasig City proudly continues a legacy of successful community participation initiatives.

Population

755,300 (2015)

Total area

31 km²

GHG Emissions

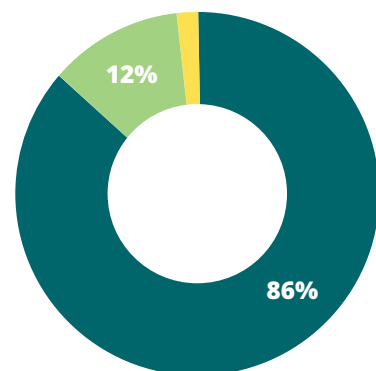
1.5 million tCO₂e (2017)

Per capita emissions

1.99 tCO₂e/capita



Figure 1: Map of Pasig City



- Stationary Energy
- Transport (on road)
- Waste (solid waste, wastewater)

Figure 2: City-level GHG Emission Inventory of Pasig City, 2017

According to Pasig City's 2017 GHG inventory, approximately 1,482,272.30 tCO₂e of emissions were generated. The energy sector contributed the majority of emissions (86%), followed by transport (12%) and waste (2%). The 20% reduction target – doubled from its initial 2010 target – equates to a reduction of 296,454 tCO₂e by 2030, with an interim reduction of at least 8% by 2025 via interventions in the energy, transport, and waste sectors. This demonstrates the great potential Pasig holds in further raising its ambition within this period.

A Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society Approach in the Philippines

The Philippines is taking a unique approach to its low emission development pathway. As a low-lying island nation, home to the dense Metro Manila area, the national government acutely aware how crucial adaptation is for its future. Similar to neighboring climate-vulnerable island and coastal countries, the Philippines' climate strategy prioritizes the adaptation pillar, with mitigation actions viewed as bolstering the country's resilience and adaptive capacity.

In its first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), submitted in April 2021, the Philippines communicated its target to "a projected GHG emissions reduction and avoidance of 75%, of which 2.71% is unconditional and 72.29% is conditional, representing the country's ambition for GHG mitigation for the period 2020 to 2030." [1] This NDC has undergone exhaustive consultation processes by the national government through the Climate Change Commission (CCC). These processes were imperative to the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach that the NDC seeks to exemplify. A whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach enjoins all key government agencies and stakeholders across all levels in the NDC formulation and

implementation processes. This approach also recognizes local governments as frontline agents mobilizing stakeholders in order to deliver on national climate commitments.

The Philippines' national government strives to create enabling frameworks for local governments. The Climate Change Act of 2009 (Republic Act of 9729) reaffirms the important role of local government units (LGUs) in addressing climate change as "the frontline agencies in the formulation, planning, and implementation of climate change action plans" (Section 14, RA 9729). LGUs are mandated to develop Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs) reflective of their social, economic, and environmental conditions. However, when the Climate Change Act and Framework Strategy were published, no local government body or national department had the mandate or capacity to guide local climate planning. Even when LGUs with resources developed their LCCAPs, they still struggled to comply with the existing requirements from siloed national departments concerning planning, development and environmental regulations. This is what the ACP project aimed to change.



Formulating a Comprehensive Local Climate Action Plan in Pasig

Carbon intensive infrastructure has a tendency to create lock-in effects. Timely mitigation action can avoid this and open up opportunities for a local carbon economy, which offers cities and sectors like energy and transport greater security against future climate impacts.

With this backdrop, the ACP project aimed to support Pasig City in improving their LCCAP through the Promise of Pasig declaration. The declaration is a collection of low emission development strategies and concrete action plans to define and meet the city's GHG reduction targets. It is ambitious, inclusive, cross-cutting, actionable, measurable, and verifiable. These characteristics align with the Ambitious City Promise aim of concrete GHG reduction targets that are more ambitious than their country's NDCs.

In 2011, Pasig City defined its first commitment of a 10% GHG emission reduction by 2020 in its LCCAP (compared to a 2010 baseline). Through the framework of the ACP project, Pasig City revisited the 2011 target and detailed new implementation strategies. This included mirroring the NDC formulation processes and applying its whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to new commitments.

Following a series of consultations with local state and non-state actors, Pasig City doubled its unconditional GHG reduction target to 20% (equivalent to 296,454.46 tCO₂e). It aims to achieve this 20% reduction target by 2030, using a 2017 baseline. This case study details the city's path in making this ambitious target happen.

Victor Ma. Regis Sotto

Pasig's mayor, Vico Sotto, elected in 2019, embodies the city's renewed willingness to reexamine its climate ambitions and to question the status quo, both of which are core to ACP. Sotto is the youngest mayor in Pasig's history, and is putting transparent, people-centric values front and center.



City Promise Methodology

The term 'Promise' represents the pledges and commitments of citizens, businesses, and local governments, putting all stakeholders on equal footing in climate action planning. The ACP project is inspired by the Promise of Seoul, which sets an example of bottom up and ambitious climate action planning. Through peer-to-peer learning and inclusive engagement, city governments and

communities in Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines set their own ambitious GHG reduction targets, actions and contribute to their country's NDCs.

The City Promises of Jakarta, Pasig, and Hanoi are guided by a common formulation process, but one which is flexible enough to accommodate local circumstances. The steps in this process are as follows:

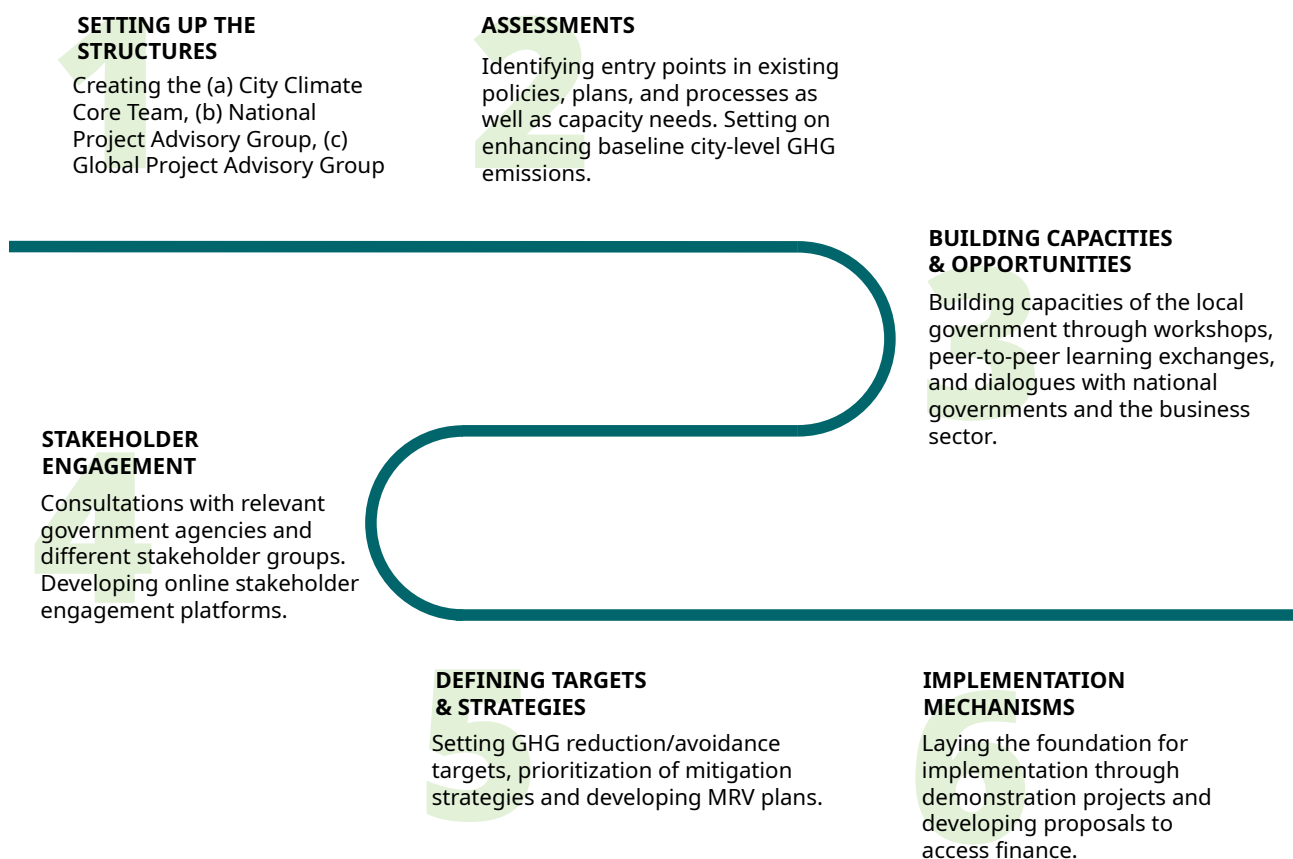


Figure 3: City Promises Formulation Process

By assessing existing policies and identifying entry points within these, ACP commitments and pledges could quickly be integrated into each city's climate processes. This seamless integration allowed project resources to be concentrated where they were needed: on fostering stakeholder engagement and implementation mechanisms, rather than on constructing new administrative policies, plans and procedures.

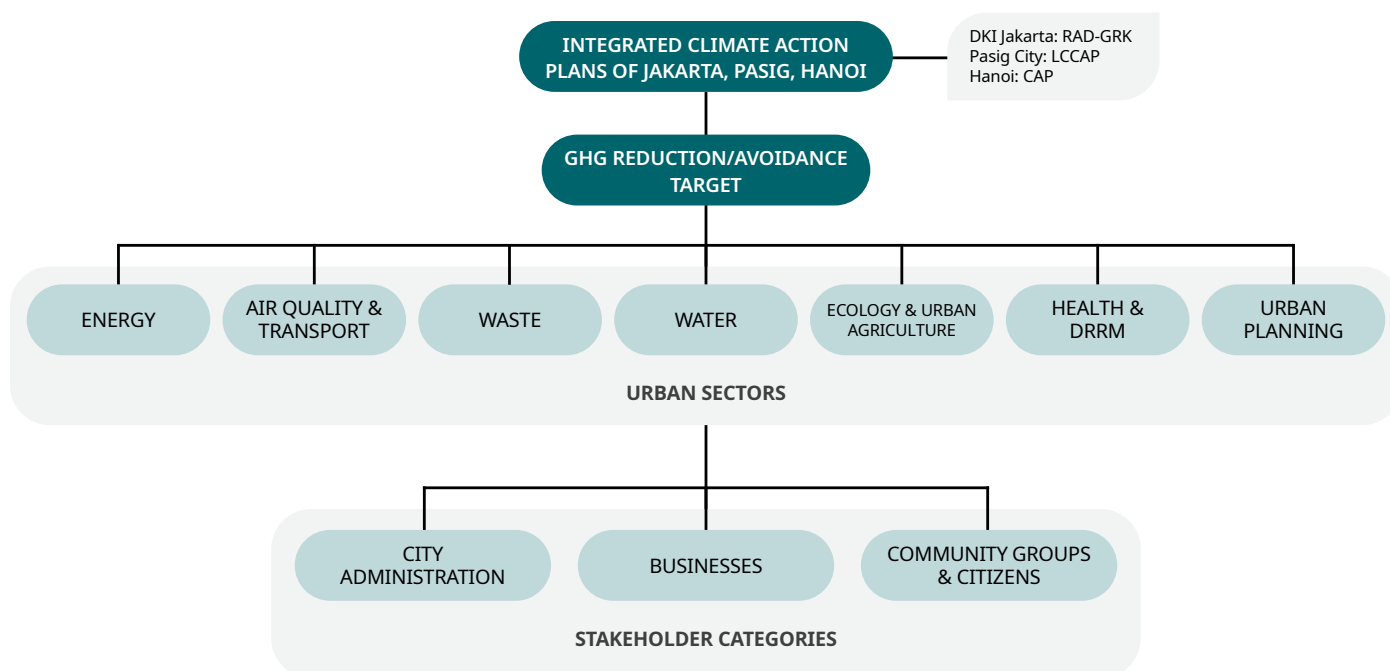
Based on the results analysis of previous activities, new GHG reduction targets and key performance indicators (KPIs) were set. The total GHG reduction target was divided further into sectoral targets to ensure major emitting sectors, like transport, energy and waste, made adequate reductions. The targets also took the cities' contexts, limitations, and development trajectories into account.

The planned GHG reductions were informed by data (e.g. GHG inventory results, mitigation potential of identified actions), stakeholders' voluntary reduction commitments (e.g. pledges made by stakeholder groups) and the expert judgment of city officials (e.g. members of City Climate Core Teams).

The City Promises contain information on the overall and sectoral GHG emissions reduction/avoidance targets, strategies, and climate actions by key stakeholder categories: city administration, businesses, community groups (including NGOs).

Extensive citizen engagement activities bolstered stakeholder-pledged interventions across priority sectors. Acknowledging this effect, the City Promises of Jakarta, Pasig, and Hanoi employed a stronger collaborative approach to further bolster climate mitigation actions and ambitions.

Figure 4: Basic structure of City Promises of Pasig, Jakarta, and Hanoi



City-level Consultation Process

City-level consultations were organized in Pasig as part of the project-specific stakeholder engagement process. Public consultations are acknowledged not only as contributors to democratic policy-making, but also as value knowledge generators for all levels of governments, with participant feedback providing leaders with insight into issues that matter to citizens.

The consultation sessions were broken down into five activities



Input presentations



Panel discussion



Open forum



Focused group discussions (FGD)



Pledge ceremony

The **input presentations** familiarized participants with contextual information about Pasig's climate risks and its existing GHG reduction targets, before communicating the ACP project aims. Participants then used this information to actively follow the **panel discussion** between Local Government Units (LGUs)

representatives and other project stakeholders, before posing questions during the **open forum**. Here, concerns and queries were directly raised with city representatives, building inter-stakeholder trust and process transparency.

Following these three initial activities, participants were invited to share their perspectives and suggestions more actively in the **focused group discussions (FGDs)**. The FGDs provided a non-plenary setting, in which the LGUs collected participant feedback on the City Promise and its commitments. Each participant group was given time to consider Pasig's commitments, to discuss and then to select a group speaker for presenting their outputs in plenary.



Figure 5: FGD discussion on solid waste management

Finally, participants made **symbolic climate pledges** that reflected the outcomes of their consultation sessions. Through this 'formalization' of commitments, the pledges sought, first, to augment participants' support for the city-level climate strategies and, second, to bring about long-term attitudinal and behavioral changes among the participants themselves.

The participatory process aimed to integrate stakeholder views into the development of the proposed pledges and to empower stakeholder groups to engage in decision-making processes. The public consultations were designed with consideration for

stakeholder preferences, limitations and local contexts and provided platforms for diverse voices, including those from marginalized and vulnerable groups, to be heard alongside one another.

Why stakeholder engagement?



Figure 6: Business representative providing remarks to the Pasig's transport plan during the City-Business Accelerator workshop

Achieving the Promise of Pasig requires strong collaboration among stakeholders, from marginalized groups like youth, women, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), to the private sector, the national government, development partners, and institutions.

150 stakeholders joined the city-level consultations over a total of 10 sessions. Stakeholders were carefully selected to ensure a balanced representation, with special attention given to ensure those from marginalized groups could overcome participation barriers.

Previously, representatives of marginalized groups have voiced frustration at their exclusion from participatory policy-making processes. During the ACP city-level consultations, the focus on inclusive and equitable climate planning was praised, with one PWD leader noting how the inclusion of disabled citizens permitted the city to hear and respond to their unique needs, be it accessible public spaces or inclusive risk management plans.

Inclusive engagement of these groups in city-level consultations allowed for synergies on the climate pledges, as well as greater overall acceptance of selected implementation mechanisms and strategies.

Stakeholder engagement was also essential for aligning local-level action with targets set out in the NDCs. During Pasig's city-level consultations, participants were explicitly asked about Pasig's current strategies, policies, and development plans and encouraged to make recommendations of how these might better serve national climate goals. This collaborative, multi-stakeholder, and multi-level approach reflects the City Promise's principles. Youth engagement was taken to the next level through the pilot behavioral change intervention described in the forthcoming section.

Pasig EcoPledge

Drawing on Seoul's EcoMileage initiative, a citizen participation program engaging 2 million Seoul residents to voluntarily reduce energy and water consumption, ACP's three model cities each developed a stakeholder engagement platform to collect citizens' individual climate action pledges towards sustainable living. The platforms are dynamic and accessible, real-time communication tools, which act as counterweights to traditional top-down communications. The Pasig Eco Pledge online engagement platform

measures its citizens' pledges against the City Promises benchmarks, allowing for multilevel monitoring of goal attainment. Pasig's vision of inclusive and co-created climate action is also supported through the platform's horizontal and vertical alignment of stakeholders. After the ACP project's official completion, the Pasig platform will continue to disseminate information, to foster dialogue, and to solicit pledges from Pasigueños in order to keep improving the Promise of Pasig.

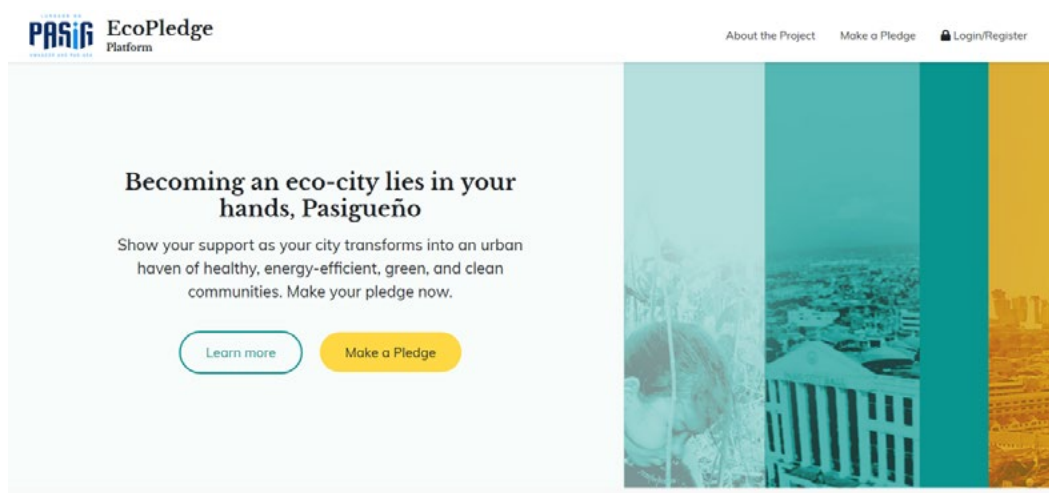


Figure 7: EcoPledge Platform of Pasig City

Pilot Projects en Route to the Promise

Given the extent and ambition of the actions included with the Promise of Pasig, several pilot activities were first carried out to ascertain how effective the proposed implementation mechanisms would be. The energy sector, with its significant contribution to overall GHG emissions, was one of the first sectors to be addressed. Around 86% of GHG emissions in Pasig, equivalent to 1.27 million tCO₂e, can be attributed to the energy sector, with the

energy-intensive operations of commercial and institutional buildings making up the majority. An estimated Php 18 billion (309.38 million Euros) is required to implement the Promise of Pasig between 2020-2030. The local government is optimistic in its ability to leverage the existing municipal budget and access available climate finance in order to meet this and accelerate implementation.

Pilot Activities for Implementing City Promise of Pasig



Pasig Recharge! (infrastructure)

Showcased green building solutions that enhance efficiency of building structure, improve resource circulation, enhance occupants' productivity, and potentially contribute to GHG emissions reduction in one selected pilot barangay. The 12.16 kWp of rooftop solar panel systems and 1,000 L portable biogas digester were installed along with 64 units of energy efficiency AC and lighting.

Results:

- 18,336 kWh/year electricity savings
- 11 tons/year organic waste diverted from landfill
- 30 tCO₂e/year GHG reduction



Amendment of Local Green Building Ordinance (policy)

Provided technical support in crafting the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the ordinance to improve resource efficiencies associated with the new buildings and retrofitting of existing buildings aligned with Philippines' Green Building Code.

Results:

- 1 amended policy on local green buildings
- 1 IRR of local green buildings policy
- 1 policy implementation monitoring tool



#PROMISEOFTHEYOUTH (behavioral change intervention)

Built the capacity of youth groups in Pasig City, specifically the Sangguniang Kabataan and youth leaders, influencing behavioral change towards collaborative climate action by honing and mobilizing youth advocates for the environment.

Results:

- 50 youth individuals trained
- 8 capacity building events delivered
- 6 knowledge products developed



ACCELERATE project

ACP supported Pasig and Parañaque (satellite city) in receiving a project grant from the Ministry of Environment of Japan (MOEJ) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies (IGES). The project 'Active City-Community Engagement to Leverage Emissions Reduction through Activities that Transform Energy-use' (ACCELERATE) strengthened sustainable consumption and production of energy patterns of local communities in Pasig and Parañaque by enhancing local implementation of the Philippine Green Building Code (PGBC) and improving energy efficiency and conservation.

Ambitious Targets in the Promise of Pasig

The Promise of Pasig highlights the city's GHG emissions reduction target of 20% by 2030, relative to its base year emissions of 2017. It aims to achieve this ambitious and robust cut of sectoral emissions through effectively monitoring climate action. By monitoring its actions, Pasig will be able to anticipate the trajectory of emissions, as envisioned by the Paris Agreement, and identify necessary measures to curb dangerous trajectories and close the gap towards a 1.5°C pathway. Pasig is acting in accordance with the Philippines' current NDC, which looks to increase access to climate finance, technology development and transfer, capacity-building and climate policy implementation.

Before the end-of-goal period, Pasig will reach an intermediate goal in 2025, by which point the city should have already reduced 8% of its GHG emissions relative to its baseline. Within this end-of-goal period, the Pasig City government will

undertake transformative action to support the reduction of CO₂ emissions in the sectors of energy, transport, and waste. The uptake of circular economy activities, sustainable consumption, and sustainable production practices will prove essential in this transformation.

'The Promise of Pasig: Low Emission Development Strategies 2020-2030' covers the nine strategic climate priority areas and 422 climate actions identified by Pasig City's constituents. Developed to pave the way for the city's low carbon future, it comprises stakeholder-driven pledges that utilize an array of instruments to cut emissions: research and knowledge sharing, process streamlining, policy and ordinance compliance, partnerships, advocacy, behavioural changes, etc. The action areas have also been expanded to ensure cross-departmental collaboration.

Sector	Specific indicators	2030 targets
Energy	Percentage of newly constructed public and private buildings and facilities that have adopted energy and resource efficient building designs, technologies and practices	100%
	Number or percentage of households and SMEs shifting to energy-efficient lighting and/or energy-efficient AC systems by 2030	10,000 or 50% of households, and 3,000 or 50% SMEs
Transport and Air Quality	Additional bicycle lanes allocated through the Pasig Basic Bicycle Network	77.5 km
Waste	Reduction rate of solid waste generation from barangays and establishments by further strengthening waste reduction and recycling	20%
Urban Agriculture and Ecology	Expanded green spaces dedicated to food production and urban landscapes among communities in the city	160,000 m ²

Table 1: Selected sector goals in the Ikhtiar Jakarta

Moving Forward

The journey of co-creating the Promise of Pasig with local stakeholders demonstrates the city's inclusive, ambitious commitment to pursue its low emission development pathway. Its climate goals have been formulated to acknowledge the feedback loops of different actions on the environment, on its economy and, most importantly, on its people: residents, partners and related stakeholders. Pasig must continue to map and engage stakeholders, (particularly hard-to-reach groups) to understand and address the root drivers of disproportionate climate risks. Ultimately, this will enable Pasig City to create informed policies and strategies that are just and inclusive.

The Promise of Pasig prompts systematic reviews of the city's regular updates to its climate action policies. In the ACP project, this flexibility is balanced by a structured framework - to ensure responsive, cohesive action - and an on-going review process - to monitor progress.

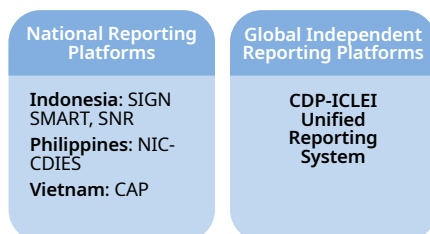
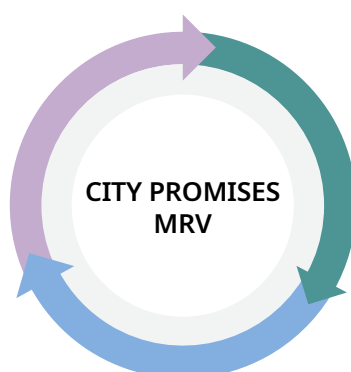
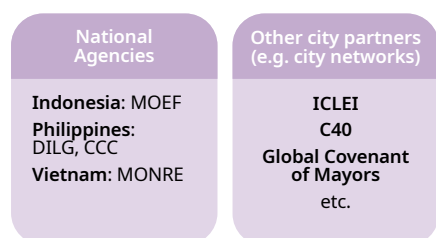
The review process allows the City of Pasig to assess if planned interventions are delivering the necessary GHG reductions. Should this not be the case, the project stakeholders can strengthen interventions and steer Pasig back towards attaining its 20% GHG emissions reduction goal by 2030.



Figure 8: City official of Pasig City participating in the internal workshop that brought together various departments to jointly develop common climate strategies

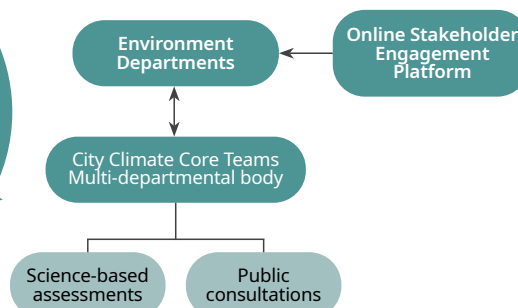
VERIFICATION

Relevant national ministries shall undertake the review and verification of the City Promises as part of the preparation and submission process of the countries' NDCs. Other partners of the cities such as city networks may also be conducting independent review of the cities' climate commitments as part of their engagement to common goals.



MONITORING

The Environment Departments of the model cities shall be the primary oversight and coordinating offices in the implementation, monitoring, and updating of the City Promises. Monitoring of the City Promises shall be done annually.



REPORTING

The Environment Departments of the model cities shall also be responsible in reporting the City Promises implementation progress to relevant national ministries and local stakeholders. Annual or biennial reporting (depending on local policies) shall be done through existing national and global reporting platforms.

Figure 9: MRV process and relevant actors for City Promises

The blueprint that Pasig will follow for the review process derives from Seoul's experience. The Korean city originally established its climate strategy, the Promise of Seoul, in 2015 with the aim to cut GHG emissions by 40% before 2030 (compared to 2005 levels). Despite an impressive 5% reduction in emissions by 2018, the city realized it was not on track to meet the international 1.5°C target.

Regular monitoring of its GHG emissions levels enabled Seoul to adjust its climate plans accordingly and realign its strategy to remain on track with the 1.5°C target. Monitoring helped Seoul shape its priorities within its climate strategy, which were consequently incorporated into the '2050 GHG Reduction Strategy by Promoting Green New Deal Policy'.

The City of Pasig will model its own City Promise review procedure on this, using local indicators, metrics and feedback channels to monitor on the ground developments and to revise the Promise of Pasig accordingly. Implementing the ambitious targets set out in the Promise of Pasig, and maintaining that ambition through reviewing and adapting interventions, will require city-wide efforts as well as closer integration of policy, financing, implementation, and monitoring processes.

Effective monitoring will be vital as the Promise of Pasig moves forward. While the City Promise is an action plan in and of itself, its impacts add most value when viewed in relation to Pasig's pre-existing policies. The Promise of Pasig builds on current mitigation strategies of Pasig City's Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP).

This integration enables contributions of the City Promise to be monitored, reported, and verified via existing MRV (Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification) mechanisms between local and national governments.

The MRV delivers a three-part continual assessment of Pasig's mitigation strategies. Each year the city's environmental department monitors the progress. First, it reviews the Promise of Pasig's planned interventions against completed measures, taking into consideration science-based GHG emission assessments as well as stakeholder feedback via public consultations and the Eco Pledge platform.

Pasig's environmental department then feeds this information upwards to the Philippine national climate reporting platform: the National Integrated Climate Change Database Information and Exchange System (NICCDIES). Monitoring information is likewise reported to the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System, an independent, global emissions reporting platform.

"Pasig City still has a long way to go in reducing its GHG emissions, and we are by no means shifting the burden of climate action to our constituents. Rather, we want to engage our constituents directly because we recognize the value of inclusive climate planning and of driving climate action from the bottom up. Pasig City is taking steps towards transformative climate action. Together with our constituents, we are up for that challenge. With these small and continuously evolving strategies, perhaps Pasig City will, one day, take its place alongside Kyoto, Paris, and Seoul as cities that are transforming our approach to climate action."

Vico Sotto,
Mayor of Pasig City



Figure 10: Discussion at Pasig's City-Business Accelerator workshop on transport sector

From here, the city-level data is verified by the appointed national ministry and incorporated into their NDC assessment. The MRV mechanisms enable the Promise of Pasig's ambitious reductions to be easily integrated into national targets, while the yearly monitoring of Pasig's progress and continual reporting allows the city to identify where it needs to concentrate its interventions to improve results.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of all partners in delivering the project activities and their commitment to this collaboration, even beyond the project completion, the project results were satisfactorily accepted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) of the Philippines. The DENR Climate Change Service, which served as the Chair of the National Project Advisory Group (NPAG) of this project since its inception, has expressed that the design, outputs, and experiences brought about by the project must be scaled up to other highly urbanized cities in the Philippines to support the country's NDC implementation.

Lessons Learned

The mechanisms of stakeholder engagement adopted in Jakarta, Hanoi and Pasig City through the ACP project have begun a critical shift in how local governments conduct engagement processes. Pasig tailored the Promise of Seoul methodology to its local and national contexts, using stakeholder engagement mechanisms to co-create sector-specific commitments. Now, the Promise of Pasig offers a pathway to a low carbon future not only for Pasig, but also for peer governments across Metro Manila. For fellow local governments daring to lead their peers with ambitious climate targets, below are action-specific takeaways:

Stakeholder engagement demands mutual reciprocation

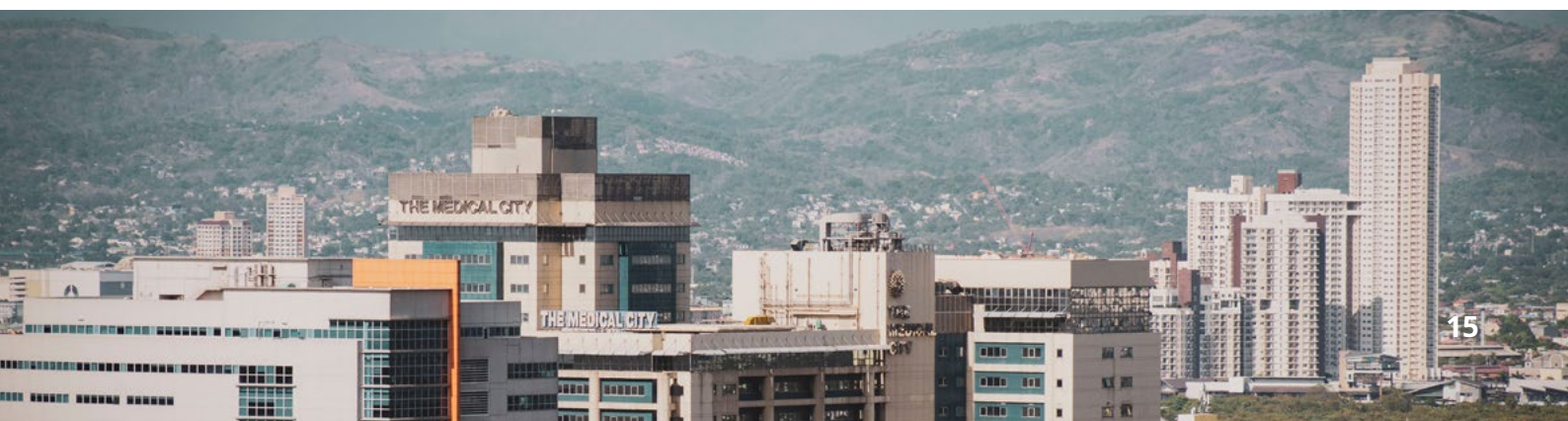
By inviting different stakeholder groups into the planning process, the local government was able to double its pledged GHG emissions target from 10% to 20%. The City of Pasig successfully engaged such a diverse body of stakeholders by communicating the issue of climate mitigation in a way that constituents could relate to and which reflected their real-life experiences. Allowing stakeholders to define and prioritize the climate interventions that are truly relevant to their realities strengthens community buy-in, resource sharing, and accelerates implementation. This ensures improved and sustained delivery of inclusive and transformative climate actions.

If one city dares to lead, others can follow

As Philippine cities start to show interest in pursuing low emission development pathways, the model employed by Pasig City in formulating its City Promise may be replicated by these local governments. This offers a genuine meaning to a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach as stakeholders serve both as local government partners and as multipliers of its low emission development goals.

In adaptation-focused environments, consider mitigation opportunities

As an island nation, the Philippines cannot ignore adaptation, but there are also opportunities for local governments to expand their mitigation actions to deliver co-benefits in their administrative mandates and development plans. For example, with the support of ACP, Pasig was able to codify its building regulations, environmental laws and practices into the 'Green Building Code', ensuring that construction projects in the city now adhere to sustainability, low-carbon guidelines. Pasig City's experience in crafting its City Promise allowed the local government to accommodate more (and more innovative) ideas that veered away from conventional approaches to planning and program development.



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