Updated City Development Strategy Report for Sorsogon City 9 Mar 2009

City Development Strategies in the Philippines: An Enabling Platform for Good Governance and Improving Service Delivery

P098173

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Sorsogon City
SORSOGON, PHILIPPINES
CITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN THE PHILIPPINES
An Enabling Platform for Good Governance and improving Service Delivery
CITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN THE PHILIPPINES:
AN ENABLING PLATFORM FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND
IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY

The CDS3 Project is a technical assistance grant funded by Cities Alliance and supported by the Asian Development Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency, UN-Habitat, and the World Bank. The CDS project was developed in response to the need to introduce an integrated, comprehensive, and participatory approach to urban management. Founded on the principles of livability, bankability, competitiveness and good governance, the CDS process guides the cities in the preparation of comprehensive, long-term development strategies, where the city government involves local stakeholders in the entire strategic planning process—assessment, visioning, strategy formulation and project prioritization and capital investment planning—through a series of consultations.

The World Bank implemented the pilot phase in the 1999 with 7 cities. Since then, the League of Cities of the Philippines, carried out 2 succeeding phases, which expanded the program to 58 cities in all. In 2001, the Upscaling Poverty Focused City Development Strategies (CDS2) covered 31 new cities. In 2006, the project CDS in the Philippines: An Enabling Platform for Good Governance and Improving Service Delivery (CDS3) added 15 new cities to the roster of CDS cities in the Philippines. Under the preparation grant for the City Development and Investment Project, the League also carried out CDS for 5 new cities. As of 2008, 64 of 120 cities have participated in the CDS program, including 3 cities assisted by ADB under the Cities without Slums Project (Caloocan, Quezon and Taguig), and the 3 cities that participated in the Local Environmental Planning and Management Project of the UN Habitat (Lipa, Cagayan de Oro and Tagbilaran).

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Sorsogon City
SORSOGON, PHILIPPINES

CITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN
THE PHILIPPINES | An Enabling Platform
for Good Governance and
improving Service Delivery

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PREFACE

The City Development Strategy process enabled the Sorsogon City to assess its development condition. This is a valuable learning exercise especially for a relatively young city like Sorsogon. The city learned the use of analytical tools, such as the urban karte and the sectoral profiles to objectively analyze the existing condition of the city. Through a series of consultation with various stakeholders, the needs, strengths, opportunities, and threats to the development of the city were articulated. As a result, the city came up with a development vision and mission that is reflective of the aspirations of the local populace.

The CDS has opened up the opportunity to mobilize significant sectors of the society to contribute to the development efforts of the city. Through the CDS process, the City Government was able to solicit the participation of both government and non-government sectors in a visioning exercise to collectively agree on the direction that will be pursued by the City. The most important result of this discussion is the creation of a tripartite body, called the Sorsogon City Partnership for Good Governance that will follow through actions on the CDS agreements. While this may be considered a small feat, the City believes that this partnership shall be determining factor in its bid for genuine and sustainable development.

Mayor Leovic R. Dioneda
Sorsogon City

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## SELECTED URBAN KARTE INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>134,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Population Growth Rate</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A11</td>
<td>Administrative Land Area (HA)</td>
<td>31,158 Ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7</td>
<td>Urban Population</td>
<td>62,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A15</td>
<td>Number of Households</td>
<td>26,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A17</td>
<td>Estimated Employment by Industry Sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Primary (agriculture, fishery, forestry)</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Secondary (manufacturing, mining, processing)</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Tertiary (services, banking, insurance, wholesale/retail)</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A18</td>
<td>What are the City’s geographical advantages?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Regional/provincial center</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Accessibility to an airport of international standards</td>
<td>Sorsogon Airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Accessibility to a port of international standards</td>
<td>Sorsogon Port, Banao Port</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>% of HH with access to piped water (level 3)</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L11</td>
<td>Cohort survival rate for elementary</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L14</td>
<td>Cohort survival rate for high school</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L30</td>
<td>Infant mortality rate</td>
<td>9.8/1,000 LB (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L41</td>
<td>Crime solution efficiency rate</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L45</td>
<td>Number of HH living in informal settlements</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C18</td>
<td>Building permits issued within the last 5 years</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Special</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C29</td>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C32</td>
<td>% population with undergraduate degree</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>% Total Debt Servicing Needs to Total Regular Income</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>% of savings to expenditures</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP2 - B</td>
<td>Per Capita Allocation to Health Services</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP2 - D</td>
<td>Per Capita Allocation to Education Sector</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Sorsogon became a city with the enactment of Republic Act 8806 on August 16, 2000 and ratification of the same on 16 December 2000. The law merged the municipalities of Sorsogon and Bacon into a component city of the Province of Sorsogon. With this merger, Sorsogon is now faced with the challenge of harmonizing the development and resources of the two municipalities to achieve its vision.

Sorsogon City is the commercial, administrative and education center of Sorsogon Province and a hub of trade and commerce. Its strategic location has given rise to a busy commercial district composed of local businesses and franchises of national and regional business chains. Most commercial businesses in the City are in the services sector, such as lodging houses, restaurants, repair shops, retail, and many others. As part of the geographical chain linking Luzon to the rest of the Philippines, it is a transshipment corridor that serves as a gateway to the Visayas and Mindanao islands. In addition, it is also the jump-off point to tourist spots in the Bicol.

Agriculture is the primary economic activity of the City, with rice, coconut and abaca as the predominant crops. The availability of land holds great potential for the development of a light industrial zone for agri-processing facilities. Pili has been identified with Bicol, particularly with the Sorsogon province which accounts for 70 percent of total pili production.

Fortifying its niche in regional development is a major challenge for the City. While it has the basic urban facilities, the challenge is how to maximize the assets that the City has and be able to spur the necessary socio-economic growth. Developing and harnessing the City’s potential for growth needs serious contemplation from the City officials and the local stakeholders. As a large segment of the population lives in poverty, this growth is imperative to address the urgent needs of the constituency.

SELECTED URBAN KARTE INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G2 Average Number of days to issue a NEW business license (w/ complete documents)</td>
<td>2.3 days</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2 Average Number of days to RENEW business license (w/ complete documents)</td>
<td>2.3 days</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G7 % of local revenue/total revenue</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G11 Frequency of meetings of the Local Development Council (LDC)</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ADDITIONAL DATA (from the survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Poverty Incidence</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Performance of elementary children in NAT</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Performance of high school children in NAT</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Percentage of participation of Local Special Bodies (LSBs) in public hearings conducted</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Presence of ELA (if yes, proceed to questions 6 and 7; if no, proceed to question 8)</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Percentage of Projects implemented from ELA derived from CLUP</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Percentage of Projects implemented from AIP derived from ELA</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 No. of registered small and medium industries (2001 vs. latest for all types)</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Number of barangays practicing segregation at source and served by an MRF</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Percent of waste generated diverted from disposal</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Presence of sanitary landfill</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SITUATION ANALYSIS

Livability

Sorsogon City is the commercial, administrative and education center of the province of Sorsogon. As such, the City can provide many infrastructure and social services. All barangays generally have access to electricity, school facilities, and medical and health services.

Sorsogon City serves as the seat of education of the province. All barangays have access to primary education institutions. In fact, participation rate is 105 percent, which includes the local residents, as well as those from the neighboring towns. Classroom to student ratio is 1:35, while teacher to student ratio is 1:32.

The City Government places high importance on education and extends various services to its constituents, including enhanced skills training programs in partnership with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority; special education programs for indigent preschool children; establishment of a Kiddie Toy Center and public library in Bacon District; continuing secondary education for children with special needs; scholarships for out-of-school youth who underwent Alternative Learning System and qualified in the placement test given by the Department of Education; and increased budget allocation for college scholarships.

In terms of medical and health services, the City Health Office, composed of a manpower complement of 580 health workers, three district health centers and 62 barangay health stations, deliver the services to the constituents. Barangay health station to population ratio is 1:3,200 which is higher than the national standard of 1:5,000. Excluding the provincial hospital, bed to population ratio is 1:2,500, which is lower than the national standard of 1:2,000. Basic utilities are generally available to residents where 94 percent have access to power and 72 percent have access to potable water.

The Core Shelter Program is being implemented by the City Social Welfare and Development Office, in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development in Region V and Gawad Kalinga to help the families affected by the typhoons in 2006. The program awarded 26 duplex houses to 50 families and an additional 29 houses had been completed; 21 more units are scheduled to be turned over to target recipients.

The City Government revisited the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) to be able to plan urban growth through a judicious allocation of land for future use. An updated CLUP and the equivalent zoning ordinance are in place as a result of this exercise. The CLUP recommends the expansion of the built up areas and the equivalent investments to improve the different zones, i.e., residential, commercial, and institutional; the conversion of cultivated forestland for forest and agro-forest uses; and the regulation of areas devoted to agriculture.

Sorsogon is host to an abundant supply of natural resources, including coastal areas, watershed, forest reserves, rivers and creeks, prime agricultural land, marshlands and geothermal fields. Because of urbanization and development, many of these resources are being subjected to rapid degradation.

In response to the alarming situation, many efforts have been initiated to protect and restore the natural endowments of the City. Through the City Environment and Natural Resources Office, rehabilitation projects are being implemented. The ongoing programs include: mangrove reforestation covering roughly 80 hectares in various barangays, maintenance of a nursery of hardwood for reforestation, solid waste management program composed of awareness building, composting, construction of barangay-level materials recovery facility, putting up of a categorized landfill, and other technologies for waste reduction. Plans are under way for a Mariculture Park in Sugod Bay, Bacon District and for a rehabilitation of fish sanctuaries. To address the environmental problems in a more comprehensive manner, the City Government is deliberating on a Local Environmental Code and Fishery Ordinance.

In the infrastructure sector, many urban facilities are being improved, including the main highway. Inter-modal transportation is available at all points of the City, with tricycles and jeepneys as the primary modes. The road network in the City extends to a length of 160 kilometers; 60 percent is paved concrete and 24 percent has gravel surface. Motorized bancas are also used to reach the outlying coastal barangays.

In addition, telecommunications facilities are run by PT&T, RCPI, Digitel, Bayantel, Smart, and Globe Telecoms. The Philippine Postal Corporation operates the Sorsogon Post Office providing domestic, international and other mail services. There are also private corporations running local television, radio and internet service providers.
Main Development Challenges

Poverty. Around half of the population lives in poverty, caused mainly by unemployment. Because of this, the City needs to implement comprehensive poverty programs to address the needs of the poor and uplift their condition. Basic services especially housing, livelihood and employment opportunities, and empowerment programs for the poor remain on top priority because of the limited capacity of the poor to provide for these basic survival needs.

Malnutrition and poor health. Health poverty is indicated by malnutrition and deaths in the family due to preventable causes. Ten percent of the households have severely and moderately underweight children under five years old, while seven percent of the households reported deaths that could have been prevented. From these impoverished families, 18 percent do not have access to potable water and 21 percent do not have access to sanitary toilet. In addition, the presence of abaca and banana plantations increases the incidence of filariasis, which is higher than the national rate. This requires regular and methodical monitoring, coupled with continuous information dissemination, by the Department of Health and the City Health Office to control the spread of the disease.

Illiteracy. Seventeen percent of the households reported that at least one member of the family could not read, write and do simple calculation. Several sitios and neighborhoods do not have access to barangay day care centers where the poor would usually avail of the preschool education for their children.

Housing and settlement. A large percentage of the households do not have full rights to the lots on which their houses are built. According to local estimates, there are around 1,900 families living in informal settlements. These households occupy the road right-of-way properties, coastal areas, easement along waterways, and government properties. The rest have monthly arrangement with landowners who can impose the immediate evacuation from these lots should owners need them.

Slow improvements in infrastructure. The commercial district has not changed in the last two decades as a result of slow improvements in infrastructure, including the construction of additional circumferential and radial roads.

Environmental degradation. Many mangrove forests and marshlands are degraded because of human activities. The forest reservation and watershed have no timber stand. The uncontrolled fishing in City waters has depleted and contaminated the marine resources of Sorsogon Bay. Red tide toxins which arise from pollution affect not only the Bay, also but the entire Albay Gulf.

Polluted waterways. Rivers that cut across the City proper are polluted due to dumping of effluents and other wastes. Due to clogging caused by the garbage in the waterways, the lives of residents occupying the riverbanks are endangered during severe flooding. Siltation of rivers is also evident.

Limited public infrastructure. The City needs to expand and upgrade its public infrastructure facilities, such as roads, bus terminal, water supply and sanitation, and enterprises, such as public market and abattoir. Existing terminals of public utility vehicles are also inadequate.

Competitiveness

As the commercial center of the province, there are many local businesses and franchises located in the City. However, only around five percent of the City is dedicated for urban use, while the majority is allocated for agricultural purposes. This indicates that agriculture remains a primary economic activity in the City, with rice, coconut and abaca as the major crops. Pili is the most popular crop in the entire province of Sorsogon, as it accounts for 70 percent of production. The Sorsogon Provincial Pili Industry Development Council was created to promote this product and address its commercial production needs, e.g. commercial farm nurseries, plantations, processing plants, and marketing networks. At the farm-level, Sorsogon City is contemplating the promotion of pili as a high-value commercial crop alongside pineapple, coffee, and cacao.

The City is also a fish-landing center and its inland waters yield various marine resources. Fishponds and fish pens similarly add to the City’s marine output, which includes shrimps, prawn, milkfish and crabs. Small-scale processing plants produce semi-processed seafood for export. It has a municipal port that services incoming cargoes from Manila and Cebu. The port is also used by motorized bancas ferrying passengers and goods to and from neighboring towns. No regular trips and routes have been developed, or revived, since the mode of transportation has predominantly become land-based.

Geothermal energy has been successfully exploited in the northern part of the City from wells drilled and developed by the Energy Development Corporation. The National Power Corporation is operating three power
plants with a capacity of 130 megawatts connected to the Luzon grid. Sulfur, gravel and sand can likewise be extracted for commercial purposes.

**Main Development Challenges**

*Limited employment opportunities in agriculture.* The agricultural sector alone could not absorb the labor force. Hence, there is a need to expand economic activities to provide a wider range of employment opportunities. Aside from handicap subcontractors, cottage-level food processors and metal fabricators that serve the local market, the City has been unsuccessful in attracting big industries to locate in the City.

*Conversion of prime agricultural lands.* Irrigated rice fields especially along the western barangays of the City are being converted to other uses because of the pressure of urban activities. Conversion to other land uses should be more strategic to balance both the commercial expansion and food security requirements.

*Need to develop the City’s eco-cultural and tourism potentials.* The City has yet to develop its full potential as an attractive tourist haven, despite existing tourist facilities, like hotels, restaurants and souvenir shops and interesting sites, e.g. world’s biggest bats inside the confines of the Energy Development Corporation, beautiful hot springs and white beaches, lakes, caves and volcanoes, historical and cultural structures.

*Prohibitive power rates.* Despite the presence of local geothermal resources, the power cost in the City remains high. Thus, the challenge is how to translate the benefits derived from geothermal resources in the City to lower power costs for the people and investors.

*Environmental degradation.* Abuse of natural resource is not only an issue of livability, but also of competitiveness. Irresponsible utilization, particularly of the marine resources of Sorsongon Bay and Albay Gulf is threatening marine productivity. In addition, Sorsogon City used to be an exporter of timber and hardwood. However, excessive logging has depleted the City’s forest resources, including the forest reservation that is supposed to cover the Geothermal Reservation and the watershed of the Sorsogon Water District.

*Congested commercial district.* In terms of size, the commercial district of Sorsogon has remained physically the same for the past 20 years. This development is partly due to the absence of circumferential and radial roads that could disperse commercial activities away from the congested business district. This congestion has in part restricted the establishment and expansion of commercial operations.

**Strengths and Opportunities**

*Sugod Bay in the Pacific Ocean shows a big potential for Mariculture Park Development which will provide bigger fish yield, better employment opportunities, and investment possibilities. Returning 10 percent of the total yield to open seas will help sustain the supply of fish to small time fishermen, matched with aggressive mangrove reforestation.*

The diversified assets of the Sorsogon City can open up equally varied employment opportunities, in the areas of ecotourism, pili nut and other agri-processing, fish culture, administrative services, and public works.

**Bankability**

Local government resources serve as the lifeblood of the City to be able to support the identified programs and projects. In this regard, the City Government is seeking to enhance revenue collection through an efficient and sound fiscal management.

Sound fiscal administration requires efficiency in the areas of resource generation, resource allocation and utilization, and accountability. Financial management tools, policies, and practices are indispensable tools to achieve these desired objectives.

The City Government generated a total income of Php280,893,712.40 for the period 2003 to 2007, while total expenditures amounted to Php255,540,019.00. The net income incurred was Php25,353,693.00 for the same period. Income grew at an average of 5.6 percent, while expenditures declined at a rate of 7.7 percent.

**Main Development Challenges**

*Increasing dependence on the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA).* The average income of the City for the past five years (2003-2007) amounted to Php15,573,646.25 with an average annual growth rate of 5.6 percent. This growth rate is attributed to the merging of the two municipalities into a city. Based from the gathered figures, the share of IRA to the City’s total revenue increased from 84.3 percent in 2003 to 87.2 percent in 2007. Conversely, the share of local revenues from aggregate income narrowed from 15.7 percent in 2003 to 12.8 percent in 2007.
Need to increase local revenue sources. To reduce reliance on IRA, the City needs to increase locally generated revenues through the expansion of the tax base, implementation of revenue code and revenue plan, and increase collection efficiency. The establishment of City-owned economic enterprises is likewise being considered to generate additional revenues.

Strengths and Opportunities

The City is planning income generating projects to be financed through direct loan, build-operate transfer and bond flotation, such as the water supply system, bus terminal, city abattoir, new city public market, hydro-electric plant, and commercial center.

Good Governance

Participation and Transparency

Participation and transparency go hand in hand in promoting good local governance. Transparency and good governance can only be ensured if there is a strong participation in local government affairs. As such, the City Government places high priority on the empowerment of the citizenry and on the promotion of people centered governance.

To facilitate this engagement, the City Government organized standing committees that will look into sectoral and community concerns, i.e., in health, population and social services, agriculture, livelihood and cooperative, women, public order and security, communications, ways and means, budget and appropriations, education, arts and culture, tourism, and youth, barangay affairs, rules, regulations and privilege, transportation, public works, trade, commerce and industry/sports, urban planning and zoning; energy; reorganization; local government and community development; justice and good government; and natural resources and ecology. The active participation of the City’s partners and stakeholders is instituted in these local special bodies and sectoral councils and committees.

Main Development Challenges

Need to institutionalize tri-partite partnership. The City Government is concerned that the citizens do not participate actively in the development affairs of the City. The City aims to reverse this sense of “disempowerment,” as indicated by the unwillingness of households to become members of legitimate community development organizations.

Strengths and Opportunities

Utilization of mass media. To disseminate information regarding LGU activities and promote transparency, the City Government utilizes mass media, including local radio and television programs.

Excellence in Public Service

To be able to meet the development challenges head on, the City Government endeavors to maintain competent manpower support, as well as sound organizational practices. To illustrate, at least 74 percent of the local personnel have college degrees and 17 percent are graduate of vocational/technical schools; many others have postgraduate degrees or units. Meanwhile, the lack of formal education, technical, and managerial skills of some of its personnel is compensated by different trainings conducted by the City Government or by other sponsoring agencies as attested by 7,595 training hours attended by its personnel.

The City Government conducts trainings and seminars that promote excellence, ethics, and accountability in public service, and build awareness on local entrepreneurial activities, such as administration of public markets. These activities are carried out with support from Asia Foundation, British Embassy and national government agencies.

The attempt to promote good governance and the streamlining of local government operations are reflected on the efficiency of completing transactions at the city hall. In fact, the local bureaucracy boasts of completing transactions within one day.

Main Development Challenges

Need to re-structure the local government bureaucracy. To ensure that the structure and the skills required for local development is present, there is a need to revisit the structure of the City Government and the competence of its personnel. Attuning local bureaucracy to the various needs in priority sectors of social housing, environment, urban poor, tourism and industry development, solid waste management among others, is pivotal.
Need for more assessment of training needs of personnel. To professionalize the staff of the City Government, there is a need to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the skills and capacity requirement and develop appropriate interventions based on such. A monitoring tool is likewise necessary to ensure that the interventions are effective.

**Strengths and Opportunities**

**Construction of new City Hall.** The City has improved the City Hall and legislative department, along with the office facilities, to improve the manner of transacting with the public.

**VISION AND CITY BRAND**

Sorsogon City envisages becoming “A City with an empowered citizenry enjoying people-centered governance, living in harmony with nature and journeying in faith with a loving God”. This vision underlies the core elements of development, namely community and governance, social equity, economic development, and sound environmental management.

Towards this vision, the City aims to

1. Develop a strong collaborative and productive partnership with the civil society;
2. Facilitate the effective and efficient delivery of quality basic services;
3. Institutionalize a system for joint monitoring of all government programs and projects;
4. Design an advocacy program for the judicious utilization of resources;
5. Facilitate the integration of sectoral plans in the plan of the city;
6. Create an investment-friendly environment;
7. Provide opportunities to strengthen family values; and
8. Develop a communication plan to popularize the Vision, Mission, Norms and Goals of the city.

**STRATEGIES**

The City Government has identified the following strategies in order to achieve its set goals and objectives:

**Economic development**

Promote Sorsogon as an investment-friendly city. The physical features of Sorsogon City, its central location and flat lowlands make it suitable as an urban center. Appropriate policies, such as an investment promotion program, will be set in place to firmly entrench its role as a sub-regional center.

Promote and develop eco-tourism. The City Government will institute appropriate policies to promote and develop the City’s eco-tourism sites in tandem with the other attractions in the region and province. Product development and marketing of sites and activities will be undertaken in this regard.

Diversify local products. To increase revenues from agriculture, the City will promote planting of high-value crops (e.g., pili, cacao, coffee, banana, lanzones, black pepper, etc.) and fish-culture production (e.g., mudcrabs, mussels, bangus, prawns/shrimps, etc.). Parallel initiatives will also be launched to intensify the production of rice, abaca, and coconut and optimize fishery production.

Increase employment opportunities. The City Government will improve employment opportunities in the City through the promotion of jobs involving skilled and semi-skilled labor and craftsmanship, e.g. mechanics, electronics, the building trades, diversified farming, etc. Livelihood and enterprise development programs will be introduced to enhance the skills of the beneficiaries.

Provide infrastructure support for the development of the commercial and agricultural sectors. In order to promote the competitiveness of the City, the provision of necessary infrastructure facilities, such as barangay electrification, irrigation systems, water supply programs, and upgrading of transportation and communication linkages will be prioritized. A relocation plan is currently under review to ease up congestion within the next 15 to 20 years.
**Social development**

Facilitate the delivery of a comprehensive package of interventions to alleviate the plight of the poor. To increase the capacities of the poor for employment and livelihood, the City Government intends to provide adult education programs, technical skills training, and the development of SME programs in anticipation of potential industries. Empowerment of farmers and fisherfolks is also a priority strategy.

Allocate government lands to address informal settlements. To address the housing needs, the City Government has started two major housing programs which have distributed homes to some 80 family-beneficiaries. Construction of additional houses is underway to provide homes to at least 71 more families. The City Government is also exploring into the possibility of using its other real properties as possible resettlement sites.

**Environment**

Enhance the empowerment of farmers and fisher folks to protect their sources of livelihood. Education and advocacy programs to build awareness on the need to implement resource management and conservation programs will be conducted for farmers and fisherfolks. An integrated upland and coastal resource management program will be formulated to encompass reforestation, regulation, capacity building, sustainable alternative fishery production, and education. This resource management plan will complement the updated CLUP.

**Governance**

Implement revenue enhancement measures. To implement the priority programs and projects, the City Government will endeavor to expand the tax base of the City; implement new tax ordinance; implement computerization of the local fiscal transactions; set up revenue-generating investments and/or self-liquidating projects through loan, public-private partnership schemes, and bond flotation. Developing the financial management capability of the local bureaucrats to foster better management of the City’s resources will also be undertaken.

Institutional capacity building. To be able to become effective public servants, the City Government is undertaking capacity building program on a regular basis. On top of this, prospects for reorganization and/or restructuring are being explored to ensure that the necessary skills and operations are in place to meet public demands. Continued professionalization of the bureaucracy is also an important component of this strategy.

**PRIORITY PROGRAMS**

**Economic development**

Development of urban and rural infrastructure, including the construction of City Public Market with wastewater treatment facility, urban waterworks, improvement of drainage system, city abattoirs, waterfront development, ports improvement in Sorsogon Bay, rehabilitation of Sorsogon airport facilities, economic zone for light industries, integrated transport terminal, urban road network (secondary roads, transport/traffic and drainage system studies), rehabilitation of hydroelectric plant and feasibility study for new development, commercial complex,

Development of the satellite city facility, including the integrated transport terminal, construction of different national offices near the City Hall, and housing project for employees

Development of eco-tourism sites and destination projects, establishment of city museum, and installation of street lights and beautification projects

**Social development**

Social housing and resettlement project, tenurial and improvement of sites and services project, and housing project for City Government employees

Farm to market roads development project, barangay electrification project, and rural barangay water supply project

Construction of daycare centers, more training programs for daycare workers, and construction and establishment of Senior Citizen Center

Repair of barangay health centers and continuous feeding program to reduce malnutrition

Construction of standard classroom with modern facilities and equipment, establishment of Kiddie Centers in Sorsogon East and West Districts, construction of classrooms for children with special needs in Sorsogon East Central School

Improvement of Bacon District Auditorium, city parks system, wildlife and
botanical garden, convention center (feasibility study)

Environment

Solid waste management facilities, such as controlled dumpsite conversion, Materials Recovery Facility, acquisition of heavy equipment for collection and dumpsite maintenance, information and education campaign

Governance

Development of City Government Center surrounded with offices of different national agencies, intensified tax collection campaign, real property tax mapping, and computerization of related key functions (real property tax assessment, tax billing and collection, business permit and licensing and accounting system)

Technical Assistance for civil society organizations on the programs of the City in social housing, coastal resource management, livelihood and coop development and other socio-economic activities

PRIORITY PROJECTS

- Construction of Elementary and Secondary Building
- Social Housing
- Construction of Barangay Health Centers
- Construction of Day Care Centers
- Establishment of Productivity Center for the Differently Abled
- Senior Citizens Center
- Housing for Employees
- Solid Waste Management Program
- Coastal Resource Management/ Bantay Dagat Project
- Ecological Sanitation
- Establishment of Fish Sanctuaries
- Mangrove Reforestation Project
- Concreting of Diversion Road
- Implementation of City within a City Satellite Market
- Implementation of City within a City Integrated Passenger Terminal
- Expansion of City Water System in Bacon District
- City Road Network Development
- Rural Barangay Water Supply
- Computerization Program
- Innovative Revenue Enhancing Plan
- Implementation of Revenue Code
- Construction/Rehabilitation of Slaughterhouse
- Construction of Integrated Passenger Terminal
- Construction of Satellite Market
- Tourism Promotion
- Small and Micro Enterprise Development/Livelihood Program
- Technical and Vocational Training Program
- Crop Diversification and Upland Agricultural Development
- Fish Cage and Seaweed Culture Development
- Irrigation Development Program
- Preparation and Distribution of Citizen Charter
- Public Governance System Scorecard/Private Sector Participation in Governance
- Computerization Program
- Professionalization of City Employees
- Strengthening of Human Resource Management Office
- Creation of Multi-Sectoral Council thru Ordinances and Executive Orders