

MUNICIPALITY OF TUBIGON, BOHOL PROVINCE, THE PHILIPPINES

PROGRAM NAME

ecoBUDGET® – poverty alleviation through environmental management

PROGRAM GOALS:

Tubigon has experienced major threats to its natural resource base, such as indiscriminate use of fertilizers and pesticides, solid waste dumping (including toxic materials), shrinking agricultural lands because of population pressures, decreasing forest reserves due to illegal logging and forest fires, as well as coastal resource management issues. Tubigon decided to implement ecoBUDGET as a framework for local environmental management in order to enhance its environmental governance and management capacity, thereby improving its local environment and the living conditions in its communities. The municipality saw ecoBUDGET's potential as a platform for linking its municipal vision, plans, strategy, resource allocation, and performance measures in order to promote sustainable development and alleviate poverty. Additionally, the municipality wanted to harmonize its different environmental management initiatives under one umbrella program and saw ecoBUDGET as a key step in that direction. The Province of Bohol intends to use the lessons learned from Tubigon's experience with ecoBUDGET to implement the program in the 47 other communities in the province.

MUNICIPAL PROFILE:

The Municipality of Tubigon's Municipal Council has eight elected members and two ex-officio members with the Vice-Mayor as the Presiding Officer. It approves the development agenda proposed by the municipality's executive branch in the form of policies and ordinances together with the annual budget.

In the Philippines, the Municipal Development Council (MDC) is a multi-sectoral council that initiates multi-sectoral development plans for the local government unit concerned. Tubigon's MDC has 48 regular members including government representatives, elected officials, leaders of Tubigon's 34 *barangays* (villages), and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), citizens' organizations and civil society.

ISSUE ADDRESSED:

Environmental management system, sustainability management system, poverty alleviation, Millennium Development Goals

SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM:

The Municipality of Tubigon began implementing ecoBUDGET in 2005 in order tackle major threats to its environmental

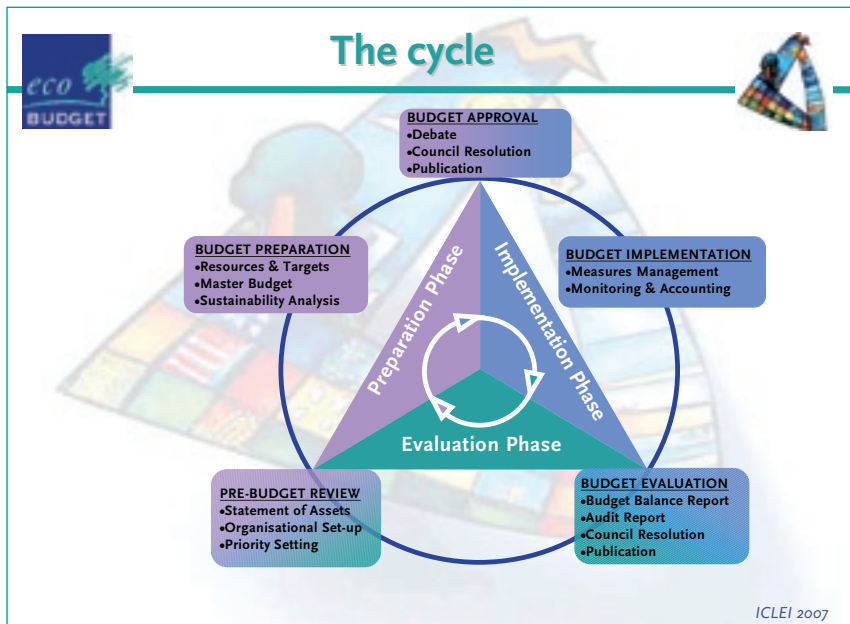


MUNICIPAL PROFILE

Population:
40,385 (2000)

Land area:
82 sq. km.

Municipal budget:
PHP 71,148,600
(USD 1,489,047) (2007)



The *ecoBUDGET* cycle

resources as well as quantify the impact of its existing environmental initiatives and make them easier to monitor and evaluate.

Through the work of a Local Implementing Team (LIT) composed of municipal staff, Tubigon developed and adopted its first *ecoBUDGET* Master Budget in November 2005. The second Master Budget for Tubigon followed one year later, in December 2006. Citizen and stakeholder participation is an integral component of Tubigon’s policy implementation process, and is therefore a key part of its *ecoBUDGET* management system. The municipality and its citizens continue to work towards the short- and long-term targets set out in each annual Master Budget, which serves as a clear action plan for the implementation of initiatives to increase the sustainability of Tubigon.

IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE:

The foundation of the economy of Bohol Province – in which Tubigon is located – is agriculture, fishery and tourism. Consequently, the viability of the municipality’s (and the province’s) economy depends on the health of its natural resources: fertile soil, clean water, high biodiversity, adequate forest cover, and healthy mangroves, seagrass, and coral reefs. The poor in the province’s rural and urban areas are particularly dependent on the province’s natural resources. Tubigon is acutely aware that it is in its interest to preserve the natural habitats that support the socio-economic and cultural life of Bohol in the face of current sustainable development challenges. Additionally, Tubigon is also aware of the need to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and from the beginning has chosen to

link its *ecoBUDGET* to the MDGs. As a result, Tubigon’s *ecoBUDGET* process is based on the strong participation of community groups and barangays.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM:

ecoBUDGET is an environmental management system designed uniquely with and for local governments. It allows municipalities to manage natural resources as efficiently as they manage financial resources. The traditional accounting system is complemented by an environmental accounting system, in which physical environmental quantities are measured instead of money. *ecoBUDGET* aims to plan, control, monitor, report on, and evaluate the consumption of natural resources (such as climate stability, air quality, land, water, raw materials, and biodiversity) for issues of significant priority within the geographical area of the municipality. The ultimate aim is to keep environmental spending within the limits set in an environmental “Master Budget.” The Master Budget allocates physical indicators to short- and long-term environmental – and potentially social – targets oriented to the sustainable management of environmental resources. Approved by the municipal council, the targets become politically binding for the entire organization. Political decision-makers and senior urban managers are involved systematically in the *ecoBUDGET* cycle, allowing political steering of the use of environmental resources.

The *ecoBUDGET* cycle mirrors the three phases of the municipal financial budgeting cycle including budget planning (i.e. the preparation of an environmental budget), budget spending

(i.e. the implementation of planned measures to meet the budget), and budget balancing (i.e. balancing the annual environmental accounts). At the end of the financial period a Budget Balance is prepared that shows to what degree the previous year's Master Budget was met. A complementary set of indicators graphically displays progress towards the municipality's short- and long-term targets. Two other documents, the Statement of Environmental Assets and the Sustainability Analysis, supplement the municipality's snapshot of its level of sustainability.

In April 2005 a municipal administrative order created Tubigon's *eco*BUDGET Local Implementing Team. Composed of nine municipal staff from different offices and departments, the team is the focal point for *eco*BUDGET in the municipality and is in charge of drafting the annual *eco*BUDGET Master



Tubigon's Local Implementing Team (June 2005), photo by A. Burzacchini

Budget and the other relevant documents. The Office of the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator serves as coordinator. Citizen and stakeholder participation is an integral component of Tubigon's policy implementation process, and is therefore a key part of its *eco*BUDGET management system. The process begins with the *eco*BUDGET indicators, targets, and measures being discussed and debated by members of the Municipal Development Council, which consists of representatives of all elements of Tubigon society. MDC representatives are encouraged to inform and consult directly with their communities about *eco*BUDGET. After the Master Budget is approved, the LIT works directly with different stakeholders and citizens' groups to implement the planned measures.

Both informal meetings and community assemblies are held to coordinate citizens' involvement in the implementation of measures. At the end of June 2005 Tubigon kicked off its first *eco*BUDGET cycle with a high level of local involvement: 15 municipalities as well as numerous representatives from the private and non-governmental sector attended the kick-off meeting.

Because *eco*BUDGET is an environmental development initiative it must pass through Tubigon's 48-member multi-sectoral Municipal Development Council. In July 2005, after consulting and deliberating, the MDC shortlisted environmental issues and concerns based on priorities, applicability, and the capacity of the stakeholders to implement. From July to October 2005, several dissemination events took place to keep the public involved and informed about the development of the draft Master Budget. The six environmental resources that form the basis of Tubigon's Master Budget are: Drinking Water, Forest Cover (Upland Forestry and Mangrove Cover), Timber/Fruit Trees, Coral Reefs and Seagrass Beds, Quarry Materials, and Good Built Environment.

On November 22, 2005 the MDC ratified and endorsed the 2006 draft Master Budget. Next, the draft Master Budget was reviewed by Tubigon's municipal council and endorsed by the three-member Committee on Environment. In December 2005 Tubigon's 2006 Master Budget ordinance was unanimously ratified and enacted by the municipal council.

After Tubigon's Master Budget was approved for implementation, the LIT, together with a team of Bohol provincial staff, prepared an annual workplan for each municipal sector that was incorporated into the respective departments' annual workplans.

During 2006 a variety of initiatives were implemented by various departments in order to meet the targets set in the Master Budget. Initiatives included the planting of timber and fruit trees, reforestation of mangroves, establishment of a new marine protected area, and the implementation of an ecological solid waste management program.

From October to December 2006 the Tubigon LIT drafted a Budget Balance which showed progress made towards the targets set out in the Master Budget. The LIT conducted consultative meetings with stakeholders regarding the submission of their progress reports. The Budget Balance was approved by the Municipal Council

RESOURCE	Indicators	Unit of Measure	Baseline Value (2004)	Value (2006)	Short term target (2006)	Long-term target (2015)	Short-term target evaluation	Comments
DRINKING WATER	Sources Positive for Coliform (out of 12 Municipal Waterworks sources)	#	4	0	0	0		
	Attainment of long-term target			100%				
	Turbidity (Municipal Waterworks Sources meeting DOH Standard concentration for suspended solids (ntu))	#	0	6	6	9		
	Attainment of long-term target			67%				
	Systems loss (non-revenue water [NRW])	%	60	57.6	55	35		
	Attainment of long-term target			10%				
FOREST COVER (COASTAL ZONE)	Area Covered or Reforested	Ha	550	553.75	555	600		
	Attainment of long-term target			8%				

Tubigon 2006 Budget Balance

in March 2007. The Municipality approved its second Master Budget for 2007 in December 2006.

PROGRAM RESULTS:

The Municipality of Tubigon is making progress towards its *ecoBUDGET* targets. The results of its 2006 Budget Balance show:

- The municipality has met most of its short-term targets for indicators in the drinking water resource area except for a reduction in the percentage of non-revenue water because the rehabilitation of old distribution pipelines has been delayed.
- The municipality has reached its short-term target regarding the establishment of marine protected areas (the target for 2006 was two new community-managed protected areas) because of strong support from the community and a partnership with non-governmental organizations working towards the same objectives.
- The municipality has met all its short-term targets in the coral reefs and sea grass beds area, forest cover, timber and fruit trees, and good built environment (which focuses on solid waste management) areas.
- The area with the least progress was the Quarry Materials resource, where the municipality has had difficulty making progress due to jurisdictional issues.
- Community involvement in areas such as mangrove reforestation and solid waste management has been very high, which contributed to meeting the *ecoBUDGET* targets for those resources.

Tubigon has found that its implementation of *ecoBUDGET* has had the following benefits:

- Strengthened the capacity of the municipality to implement an integrated environmental management system through procedural discipline, training, and intellectual support.
- Created an enabling environment of appropriate policies, procedures and structures which has allowed the municipality to address and coordinate local environmental issues more effectively.
- Allowed the municipality to take the lead in initiating environmentally responsible behaviour in its internal administrative procedures and throughout the whole municipality.
- Increased political commitment to sustainability.
- Achieved greater participation (communication and interaction) between local authorities and stakeholders.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Tubigon has found that strong community involvement leads to good results. The municipality engaged people's organizations from the start and continues to engage them in on-going projects (such as mangrove reforestation) to help meet the *ecoBUDGET* targets.

The creation of the LIT as a central coordinating team and the incorporation of *ecoBUDGET* into the relevant departments' work plans have made implementation less complicated. Additionally, the specific financial budgets for Tubigon's *ecoBUDGET* activities were



Vaxjö and Tubigon municipal staff and ICLEI staff during field visit to Tubigon (June 2005), photo by A. Burzacchini

reduced because funds for most activities to meet *ecoBUDGET* targets are allocated as part of each department's annual budgetary allocation. Tubigon recognized the importance of political commitment and secured the support of elected officials from the very beginning. Since the municipality is currently working on several environmental initiatives involving local and foreign partner NGOs, implementing a program such as *ecoBUDGET* is not new. Tubigon's current political leadership is very development oriented and welcomes initiatives that promote sustainable community development.

Because Tubigon doesn't have the power to regulate certain areas (such as quarries) it has been difficult for the municipality to implement make progress in addressing these areas.

Tubigon has addressed some concerns and issues unofficially through discussions with its counterparts at different levels of government, however, municipal staff feel that there is a need for more concrete legislative reforms at higher levels of government.

As well as addressing environmental issues, Tubigon has found that *ecoBUDGET* can be used to address poverty alleviation and the MDGs. In the Quarry Materials resource, an alternative livelihood project is one of the activities in the municipality's workplan. In the Drinking Water resource, the municipality has plans in place to expand the water service delivery area to provide increased access to clean and safe drinking water. One of the main causes of child mortality in Tubigon is diarrhea traced to unsafe drinking water.

Tubigon has found that public education on environmental management is crucial. In the

Philippines people tend to focus on the economy and prioritize putting food on the table over taking care of the environment. In order to address this situation Tubigon feels that more advocacy and more information campaigns to raise citizens' level of awareness are necessary. Tubigon has made some progress in this area but believes it still has a lot more work to do.

KEY REPLICATION ASPECTS:

The experiences of Tubigon and other cities that have implemented *ecoBUDGET* have shown that *ecoBUDGET* can be readily applied in a range of local governments. The instrument is applicable in various world regions, in large cities and small towns, and developed and developing countries, regardless of political persuasion. *ecoBUDGET* also has the potential to support poverty alleviation efforts and meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Based on Tubigon's experience with *ecoBUDGET*, the Province of Bohol has developed a list of recommendations for the implementation of *ecoBUDGET* in other parts of the province:

- Focus on an annual investment model rather than annual implementation targets. Keep in mind that depleted resources cannot be replaced in a year. Also, a short-term approach is not responsive to gradual, long-term environmental damage such as soil erosion and depletion, biodiversity loss, etc.
- Develop environmental indicators appropriate for a rural setting. Since the livelihoods of rural dwellers (such as farming and fishing) are often heavily dependent on natural resources, it is important to address the interrelationship between poverty and environmental degradation. As well, more proactive strategies must be used. Since rural environments are often less degraded than urban environments, it is necessary to focus on preventing environmental degradation, rather than solely reacting to environmental damage. Address relevant local threats (such as El Niño and La Niña) and customize indicators to each locality.
- Utilize indicators that measure environmental health, and levels of poverty and natural resources (such as access to safe water and sanitation, time/distance involved in collecting water, prevalence of dengue, percent of rural children under age five who are underweight, number of deaths from natural disasters by income class, percent of farmers on land situated on slopes).

STAFF:

One full-time staff person spends part of his time providing administrative support to the Office of the Municipal Planning & Development Coordinator and serving as a liaison between and among the LIT members.

Nine municipal staff members from various departments form Tubigon's Local Implementing Team. As well, there are a number of partners from academia, NGOs, and people's organizations involved in the project. Tubigon received peer support from the cities of Växjö (Sweden) and Bologna (Italy), two cities with significant experience with *ecoBUDGET*. Technical assistance was provided by ICLEI staff.

BUDGET AND FINANCING:

The Municipality of Tubigon has allocated PHP 250,000 (USD 5,300) for both 2006 and 2007 for *ecoBUDGET* activities but the actual municipal contribution is much greater since each municipal department implementing projects and activities related to *ecoBUDGET* (such as reforestation) has allocated certain amounts to implement these activities as part of their regular annual budget. Additionally, some partners (particularly communities and NGOs) have provided materials and labor for *ecoBUDGET* projects and activities. Tubigon also



Mangrove planting in Tubigon,
photo from the Municipality of Tubigon

received financial support from the European Union's Asia Urbs program.

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ICLEI–Local Governments for Sustainability is an international association of local governments implementing sustainable development. ICLEI's mission is to build and serve a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve tangible improvements in global sustainability with special focus on environmental conditions through cumulative local actions.

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