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Case Study

Exploring Experiences in Participating in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) Program 2022: A Case Study of the Municipality of Cardona

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences, challenges, and recommendations of the Municipality of Cardona in its participation in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) program. The SGLG evaluation process was found to be meticulous and comprehensive, providing a thorough assessment of the municipality's governance practices. Through the SGLG assessment, the municipality successfully identified its strengths and weaknesses, enabling targeted interventions and continuous improvement in governance. However, the municipality faced challenges during the SGLG participation. Limited financial resources and inadequate training and staffing hindered its ability to meet the SGLG requirements effectively. Additionally, the complex requirements and extensive documentation of the SGLG program demanded significant time and effort, often exceeding available timeframes and affecting the quality of submissions. Balancing regular duties with the additional workload of the SGLG assessment posed time constraints and challenges in managing priorities. To address these challenges, recommendations have been proposed. Enhancing financial resources, investing in capacity building programs, and improving data management systems are crucial to support the municipality's SGLG participation. Allocating dedicated resources and time specifically for the SGLG assessment process is essential to ensure thorough self-assessment, data gathering, and documentation. Furthermore, fostering stakeholder engagement and promoting a culture of continuous improvement will enhance the municipality's governance practices and overall SGLG performance. Implementing these recommendations will strengthen the Municipality of Cardona's participation in the SGLG program, leading to sustainable development and improved services for its constituents.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The SGLG is an award and recognition system in the Philippines that aims to promote good governance practices among local government units (LGUs). It recognizes LGUs that have demonstrated excellence in key governance areas.

One of the main objectives of the SGLG is to encourage LGUs to improve their performance and delivery of public services. According to the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) of the Philippines, the SGLG “seeks to institutionalize a culture of excellence and continue pushing for the attainment of the national government’s development agenda.” (DILG, 2017)

The SGLG utilizes a set of criteria and indicators to assess the performance of LGUs in various governance areas. These areas include financial administration, disaster preparedness, social protection, peace and order, and business-friendliness and competitiveness, among others. By meeting the criteria and demonstrating good performance in these areas, LGUs become eligible for the SGLG award. The SGLG has been recognized for its effectiveness in promoting good governance and driving positive change in LGUs. According to a study conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the SGLG has helped improve the overall performance of LGUs and has led to increased transparency and accountability in local governance. (ADB, 2019) Furthermore, the SGLG serves as a tool for LGUs to benchmark their performance against national standards and best practices. It encourages LGUs to adopt innovative and effective approaches to governance. The DILG provides capacity development programs and technical assistance to help LGUs meet the SGLG criteria and improve their performance. (DILG, 2019) This citation highlights the support and resources provided by the DILG to assist LGUs in their journey towards SGLG recognition. The Municipality of Cardona is a local government unit located in the province of Rizal, Philippines. The town is known for its scenic views and natural attractions. It is nestled along the eastern shore of Laguna de Bay, the largest lake in the Philippines. The municipality boasts picturesque landscapes, including rock garden, paragliding site, and the serene beauty of the lake. In terms of governance, the municipality’s administration works towards the provision of basic services and the implementation of various development programs to uplift the lives of its residents.

The Municipality of Cardona has actively participated in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) assessment and has been a passer and awardee for four (4) years 2022, 2017, 2016, and 2014 as a Good Financial Housekeeping Passer.

“Unveiling the Journey: Evaluating the Road to Good Governance in the Municipality of Cardona through the Seal of Good Local Governance” is conducted to serve several important purposes. Firstly, it allows the Municipality of Cardona to evaluate its performance and progress in terms of good governance. Through this evaluation, Cardona can reflect on its strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, enabling the municipality to identify gaps in governance practices and develop strategies to address them effectively.

Secondly, the evaluation process provides an opportunity for recognition of the municipality’s achievements. By participating in the SGLG assessment, Cardona can showcase its successful

initiatives, best practices, and outstanding performance in various governance areas. This recognition serves as an incentive for continued commitment to good governance and motivates the municipality to maintain and further enhance its achievements.

Furthermore, the evaluation process allows Cardona to benchmark its governance practices against national standards set by the SGLG program. By assessing its performance against these standards, the municipality ensures that its efforts are aligned with the broader goals of national development and good governance.

Overall, “Unveiling the Journey: Evaluating the Road to Good Governance in the Municipality of Cardona through the Seal of Good Local Governance” provides a structured and standardized framework for evaluating the municipality’s governance practices, recognizing achievements, and benchmarking against national standards. It enables Cardona to continuously improve its governance performance, enhance service delivery to its constituents, and contribute to the overall development of the municipality.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to determine the following objectives:

1. To explore the experiences of the Municipality of Cardona in participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)
2. To examine challenges and obstacles encountered by the Municipality of Cardona in participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)
3. To identify any specific strategies or practices employed by the Municipality of Cardona in participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Following the successful implementation of the Seal of Good Housekeeping, former DILG Secretary Mar Roxas introduced the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) to enhance the practice of effective governance nationwide. Unlike its predecessor, the Seal of Good Housekeeping, which primarily assessed compliance with the Department’s Full Disclosure Policy in budget, revenue, and procurement areas, the SGLG aims to elevate standards across various governance aspects. According to the DILG, 1,372 LGUs (84% of the total) have met the minimum criteria for good housekeeping, indicating their preparedness to uphold principles of good governance (DILG, 2014). Furthermore, the program also advocates for LGUs to foster a conducive environment for investors and ensure the safety and security of their constituents while preserving the integrity of the environment. To qualify for the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG), an LGU must excel in three core assessment areas: 1) maintaining good financial management practices, 2) providing social protection services, and 3) demonstrating disaster preparedness. Additionally, they must excel in at least one of the essential assessment areas, such as promoting business-friendliness and competitiveness, maintaining peace and order, or implementing effective environmental management measures. Apart from the prestige of being recognized as an SGLG recipient, eligible local governments can access incentives like the Performance Challenge Fund (PCF) and other national performance-based



programs. LGUs that fall short of meeting the SGLG criteria will receive capacity development support through the Local Government Academy of the DILG. Launched in 2014, the SGLG serves as a symbol of integrity and commitment to excellence in public service performance. It represents the dedication, competence, and outstanding performance of LGUs, recognized by the national government through the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) (DILG, 2014).

Given the broad and intricate nature of good governance, it's crucial to establish a mechanism for measuring and managing it effectively, thus institutionalizing a system that enhances performance measurement and management. With this objective in mind, the national government, under the auspices of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, introduced an award system in 2015 to acknowledge and incentivize outstanding performance by local government units (LGUs) - the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG). Serving as a revamped and enhanced iteration of the former Seal of Good Housekeeping (SGH), the SGLG represents a shift and advancement from a basic performance assessment tool to a comprehensive, output-oriented performance measurement tool capable of consistently and tangibly tracking local government performance

Año (2019) emphasized that with the enactment of the SGLG Act, local government units would enhance their services, viewing the SGLG as a catalyst for promoting good governance among LGUs.

Legarda (2018), in her keynote address during the 2018 SGLG Awarding, highlighted that the Seal of Good Local Governance serves as a reassurance that LGUs are progressing in the right direction. This underscores the program's core principle that LGUs should deliver deserving services to their constituents.

Furthermore, Duterte-Carpio (2016) expressed that receiving the Seal of Good Local Governance award motivates local chief executives, like herself, to better serve the public. Additionally, Domingo (2016) stated that the SGLG award serves as evidence of the effective leadership and dedication of public servants within the Davao city government.

In her study, Gonzalvo (2021) study investigates the level of awareness and implementation of the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) among LGU officials in Marinduque. Employing a descriptive quantitative correlational research design, the study surveyed LGU officials directly involved in the SGLG using a questionnaire. Statistical analyses included a four-point Likert scale, mean, percentage, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Results indicate that LGU officials possess a high awareness of SGLG requirements, with most requirements either fully or partially implemented. Notably, a significant correlation between awareness and implementation was observed in Social Protection and Environmental Management. The study concludes that while Marinduque's LGU officials demonstrate a solid understanding of SGLG requirements, there are challenges in implementing programs, projects, and activities mandated by the SGLG. Factors such as structural and fiscal capacity influence implementation, with disparities in prosperity impacting governance practices. Additionally, the study suggests that the proposed SGLG Program Implementation Guide serves as a valuable resource

for LGUs seeking to enhance local governance.

In addition, Cagas, J. F., & Balacy, G. M. V. (2022) descriptive study explores the challenges and opportunities faced by the local government of Digos in pursuing the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) and the Performance Challenge Fund (PCF). Employing a mixed methods research design, particularly the convergent parallel approach, the qualitative component identifies enabling factors and areas for improvement in SGLG and PCF implementation based on input from city government personnel, oversight government agencies, and PCF beneficiaries. The quantitative aspect assesses constituent perceptions of the SGLG and PCF's contributions to improved local governance through a survey. Thematic analysis and descriptive statistics were used for data analysis. Results indicate that enabling factors such as anticipation, articulation, and delegation facilitated Digos City's SGLG award, while areas for improvement include risk aversion, information management, participation, and devolution. Constituent perceptions reflect a high level of agreement ($x=3.98$, $n=399$) regarding the positive impact of SGLG and PCF on local governance. Financial administration and business friendliness and competitiveness criteria received particularly high perceptions. The study infers that future challenges for Digos City in SGLG implementation include risk management and increasing participation, while opportunities lie in e-governance implementation and capacity building for decentralization

Furthermore, Medina-Guce, C. (2019) study, conducted for the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Bureau of Local Government Supervision under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-DILG Support for Local Governance Program (SLGP), explores insights from five years of Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) data. Guided by key questions, the study aims to understand the performance of local governments (LGs), derive policy recommendations, and identify research agendas from the SGLG dataset analysis. The analysis considers the variable increases in qualifying and assessment criteria, revealing an overall downward trend in qualifiers. However, nuanced examination shows that LG performance improved within two years, particularly in 2014 to 2016, and that gradual intensification of performance standards enables learning. Performance trends differ among LG types and between core and essential principles. LGs exhibit fluctuations in performance even within similar evaluation terms, highlighting the need for further investigation into enabling and hindering factors. Policy recommendations include establishing a roadmap for increasing SGLG criteria, gradually shifting assessments toward outcome indicators, and revisiting the assessment cycle. Technical recommendations propose exploring factors contributing to LG performance, identifying performance priorities for different LG types, integrating LG plans with assessment criteria, and maximizing dataset disaggregation for richer insights.

Finally, Banogon, M. R. (2019) descriptive comparative research delves into the implementation of projects facilitated by the Seal of Good Local Governance Award in Bais and Dumaguete cities within Negros Oriental. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with local government officials and project beneficiaries, the study evaluates the performance status across



core dimensions of good local governance. Results reveal that both cities utilized the Performance Challenge Fund to develop projects aimed at benefiting their respective coastal barangays, thereby enhancing and safeguarding community well-being. The study underscores the pivotal role of local government units in achieving development objectives within their jurisdictions. Recommendations include the development of strategic and sustainable plans, comprehensive social welfare programs to enhance service delivery efficiency, capacity building for government workers, mitigation of political differences among officials, and promotion of stakeholder participation. These measures are essential for fostering inclusive and effective governance practices conducive to community development and well-being.

In the context of the current study, the literature reviews, encompassing works by Gonzalvo (2021), Cagas & Balacy (2022), Medina-Guce (2019), and Banogon (2019), offer a comprehensive understanding of the significance, evolution, implementation challenges, and outcomes of the SGLG program. By synthesizing empirical studies and analyses from various regions, including Marinduque, Digos City, and Bais and Dumaguete cities in Negros Oriental, the study gains insights into the awareness, implementation practices, and impacts of SGLG participation on local governance and community development. Additionally, policy recommendations and best practices extracted from the literature, such as those proposed by Medina-Guce (2019) and Banogon (2019), offer practical guidance for addressing challenges, maximizing opportunities, and fostering effective governance practices at the local level. These insights contextualize the experiences and perceptions of the Municipality of Cardona within the broader landscape of SGLG implementation, enriching the study's understanding and providing a basis for identifying strategies to optimize SGLG participation and achieve governance objectives.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, phenomenological method of qualitative research was adopted. The phenomenological method of qualitative

research aims to understand and interpret individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences. In the context of studying the experiences of the Municipality of Cardona in participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG). Employing the purposive sampling method (Palinkas, *et al.*, 2013), participants of this study were Department Heads and SGLG Committee of the Municipality of Cardona. The instrument utilized in the study was researcher-made. Questions included are probing and open-ended in nature so that sufficient data will be collected for the analysis. Questions are the following but not limited to: (1) Can you describe your overall experience with participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)? (2) Can you describe any challenges or obstacles you encountered during your participation in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)? and (3) What are specific strategies or practices employed by the Municipality of Cardona in participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)? The protocols in the conduct of research was strictly employed by the researchers. Upon approval, data collection commenced. Department Heads and SGLG Committee were interviewed using the focus group discussion (FGD). Focus group discussions involve gathering people with similar experiences to discuss specific topics of interest, it is a form of data collection strategy that gives the participants the freedom to share their opinions, ideas, and experiences on a certain phenomenon (Focus Group Discussion, 2016). The moderator is the researcher of the current study who shared the same experiences as the participants. Active analysis, or analysis concurrent with data gathering, was employed by each researcher assigned to a specific faction. As stated by Yin (2009) the process of active analysis further drives data collection. To eliminate albeit bias of the study, a member audit was done by the researchers to match all the initial findings and agree on the subthemes presented in this study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Experiences of the Municipality of Cardona in participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)

Table 1. Experiences of the Municipality of Cardona in participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)

Themes	Responses	Meaning
Rigorous evaluation process	"The evaluation process of the SGLG program is meticulous and thorough, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of the LGU's governance practices."-D1 "Participating in the SGLG program requires undergoing a rigorous evaluation process that examines various aspects of governance, leaving no room for oversight."-D2 "Every document was scrutinized and assessed carefully"-D4	The overall experience revealed that the evaluation process is rigorous and meticulous, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of the LGU's adherence to the program's standards.
Identifying strengths and weaknesses	"The SGLG assessment process helps LGUs identify their strengths in governance practices, recognizing areas where they excel and can serve as models for others."- D7 "SGLG program allows LGUs to gain valuable insights into their governance strengths, enabling them to leverage those areas for further improvement and development."-D10 "Through the SGLG evaluation, LGUs can identify their weaknesses in governance and pinpoint areas that require improvement, providing a roadmap for targeted interventions" -D11	The assessment process helps LGUs identify their weaknesses and areas requiring improvement, providing a roadmap for targeted interventions and focused efforts..
Encouragement for continuous improvement	"Through this SGLG, we are encouraged to leverage our services and programs"-D8 "Before, During and After the assessment, we were motivated to continuously improve especially to those areas that need careful attention."-D9 "The SGLG serves as an eye-opener for us to keep moving and innovating, ensuring we provide excellent and sustainable government services to our constituents"-D3	SGLG program serves as a catalyst for LGUs to strive for excellence, maximize their services, continuously improve in identified areas, and innovate to provide sustainable government services. It fosters a mindset of continuous growth and development in LGUs' governance practices, benefiting their constituents and the overall community.



Table 1 presents the experiences of the Municipality of Cardona in participating in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) program. It highlights three main themes: the rigorous evaluation process, the identification of strengths and weaknesses, and the encouragement for continuous improvement. The municipality acknowledges the meticulous evaluation process of the SGLG program, which ensures a comprehensive assessment of governance practices. Through this assessment, they identify both strengths to be celebrated

and weaknesses to be addressed, providing a clear roadmap for targeted interventions. Moreover, the SGLG serves as a catalyst for continuous improvement, motivating the municipality to innovate and strive for excellence in providing sustainable government services to its constituents.

4.2. Challenges and obstacles encountered of the Municipality of Cardona in participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)

Table 2. Challenges and obstacles encountered of the Municipality of Cardona in participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)

Themes	Responses	Meaning
Limited Resources	<p>"We faced challenges due to limited financial resources and inadequate, training and orientation and staffing to meet the SGLG requirements." D1</p> <p>"We encountered difficulties in accessing necessary funds for implementing projects and initiatives aligned with the SGLG criteria." D9</p> <p>"Due to limited manpower, we faced challenges in adequately implementing and monitoring the SGLG requirements across various departments and sectors." -D3</p>	Limited financial resources and inadequate training and orientation are significant challenges in participating in the SGLG. The lack of financial resources can hinder the implementation of projects and initiatives that align with the SGLG criteria. Difficulties in accessing necessary funds restrict the ability to carry out essential activities. Additionally, limited manpower poses challenges in effectively implementing and monitoring the SGLG requirements across various departments and sectors. Insufficient staffing levels may limit the capacity to fulfill the necessary responsibilities and comply with the SGLG standards.
Complex Requirements and Documentation	<p>The SGLG had a rigorous set of requirements and extensive documentation, making the process complex and time-consuming."- D4</p> <p>"The SGLG documentation process required extensive data collection, analysis, and reporting, posing challenges in terms of data accuracy and availability."-D12</p> <p>"Understanding and interpreting the intricate SGLG criteria and indicators proved to be a complex task, demanding significant time and effort to ensure compliance."-D6</p>	The SGLG presents challenges in terms of complex requirements and documentation. The rigorous set of requirements and extensive documentation make the process complex and time-consuming. Participants need to devote considerable time and effort to understanding and interpreting the intricate SGLG criteria and indicators to ensure compliance. The documentation process itself involves extensive data collection, analysis, and reporting, which can be challenging in terms of ensuring data accuracy and availability. Overcoming these challenges requires careful attention to detail, effective data management practices, and a thorough understanding of the SGLG criteria and documentation requirements. Participants need to allocate sufficient time and resources to meet the demanding nature of the documentation process and ensure accurate and comprehensive submissions.
Time Constraints	<p>"The SGLG assessment coincided with other demanding responsibilities, leading to time conflicts and challenges in allocating sufficient time and attention to the assessment process."-D8</p> <p>"The time required for thorough self-assessment, data gathering, and documentation often exceeded the available timeframe, creating pressure and impacting the quality of submissions."-D11</p> <p>The time constraints were a significant challenge as we had to balance our regular duties with the additional workload of preparing for the SGLG assessment."- D12</p>	The assessment process often overlaps with other demanding responsibilities, resulting in time conflicts and difficulties in dedicating sufficient time and attention to the assessment process. The comprehensive nature of self-assessment, data gathering, and documentation requires a significant amount of time that often exceeds the available timeframe. This can create pressure and impact the quality of submissions. Balancing regular duties with the additional workload of preparing for the SGLG assessment poses challenges in managing time effectively. Participants must find ways to prioritize tasks, allocate sufficient time, and optimize their workflow to ensure that they meet the required deadlines and maintain the quality of their submissions.

Table 2 presents the challenges encountered by the Municipality of Cardona in participating in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) program. The municipality faces limitations in financial resources, training, and staffing, hindering their ability to meet SGLG requirements effectively. Complex criteria and extensive documentation demand significant time and effort, challenging participants to ensure compliance and accuracy. Moreover, time constraints exacerbate the pressure, as SGLG assessments overlap with existing responsibilities, impacting the quality of submissions. These findings underscore the importance of addressing resource constraints, streamlining processes, and improving time management to enhance participation in the SGLG program.

4.3. Specific strategies or practices of the Municipality of Cardona in participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)

Table 3 presents the specific strategies and practices implemented by the Municipality of Cardona in their participation in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) program. Through active stakeholder engagement and collaboration, the municipality

fosters inclusive decision-making processes, leveraging diverse perspectives to enhance their SGLG efforts. They prioritize effective data management and documentation practices, implementing robust systems to ensure accuracy and compliance with SGLG requirements. Moreover, clear and timely communication channels are established to disseminate information and updates, fostering transparency and keeping stakeholders and the community informed and engaged throughout the process. These strategies reflect the municipality's commitment to inclusive governance, efficient operations, and transparent communication, contributing to their successful participation in the SGLG program.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Municipality of Cardona's participation in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) program provided valuable experiences and insights. The rigorous evaluation process of the SGLG program was found to be meticulous and thorough, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of the municipality's governance practices. Every document was carefully scrutinized



Table 3. Specific strategies or practices of the Municipality of Cardona in participating in Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG)

Themes	Responses	Meaning
Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration	The Municipality of Cardona actively engaged stakeholders, including community organizations, government agencies, and private entities, in the SGLG participation process.- D10, D9 and D7 Collaborative platforms and mechanisms were established to facilitate meaningful participation, encourage dialogue, and incorporate diverse perspectives into decision-making processes.- D12, D11,D13	The Municipality of Cardona actively engaged stakeholders through collaborative platforms, fostering meaningful participation and incorporating diverse perspectives into decision-making processes for their SGLG participation.
Data Management and Documentation	The municipality prioritized effective data management and documentation practices to meet the requirements of the SGLG. -D3, D4, D5 Robust systems and processes were implemented to collect, analyze, and accurately document relevant data and information required for the assessment.- D1, D10	The Municipality of Cardona demonstrated a commitment to effective data management and documentation practices, implementing robust systems and processes to collect, analyze, and accurately document the necessary data and information required for the SGLG assessment.
Communication and Information Sharing	“Effective communication and information sharing were key aspects of the municipality’s SGLG participation.- D15, D1,D3 Clear and timely communication channels were established to ensure that relevant information, updates, and progress reports regarding the SGLG efforts were shared with stakeholders and the community.-D1, D3,D5	“Effective communication and information sharing were key aspects of the municipality’s SGLG participation. Clear and timely communication channels were established to ensure that relevant information, updates, and progress reports regarding the SGLG efforts were shared with stakeholders and the community.

and assessed, leaving no room for oversight. Through the assessment, the municipality was able to identify their strengths in governance practices, recognizing areas where they excel and can serve as models for others. The SGLG program allowed them to gain valuable insights into their weaknesses, providing a roadmap for targeted interventions and focused efforts to improve governance.

Participating in the SGLG program served as a catalyst for the Municipality of Cardona to continuously improve. It motivated them to leverage their services and programs, striving for excellence in identified areas and continuously innovating to provide sustainable government services to their constituents. The SGLG assessment process served as an eye-opener, keeping them moving forward and encouraging continuous growth and development in their governance practices.

However, the participation in the SGLG program was not without its challenges. Limited financial resources and inadequate training and orientation were significant obstacles. The municipality faced difficulties in accessing necessary funds for implementing projects aligned with the SGLG criteria. Limited manpower also posed challenges in adequately implementing and monitoring the SGLG requirements across various departments and sectors. Insufficient staffing levels hampered their capacity to fulfill responsibilities and comply with the SGLG standards.

The complex requirements and documentation process of the SGLG also presented challenges. Understanding and interpreting the intricate criteria and indicators demanded significant time and effort to ensure compliance. Extensive data collection, analysis, and reporting were required, posing challenges in terms of data accuracy and availability. Additionally, time constraints were a significant challenge as the SGLG assessment coincided with other demanding responsibilities. Allocating sufficient time and attention to the assessment process was difficult, and the pressure to complete thorough self-assessment, data gathering, and documentation impacted the quality of submissions.

To overcome these challenges, the Municipality of Cardona employed specific strategies and practices. They actively engaged stakeholders through collaborative platforms,

encouraging meaningful participation and incorporating diverse perspectives into decision-making processes. Effective data management and documentation practices were prioritized, implementing robust systems and processes to collect, analyze, and accurately document the necessary information for the assessment. Clear and timely communication channels were established to ensure relevant information, updates, and progress reports were shared with stakeholders and the community.

In conclusion, the Municipality of Cardona’s participation in the SGLG program provided valuable experiences. They faced challenges in limited resources, complex requirements, and time constraints, but their commitment to continuous improvement and the implementation of specific strategies allowed them to make significant progress. Through the SGLG program, they gained insights into their strengths and weaknesses, identified areas for improvement, and fostered a culture of excellence and innovation in their governance practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the experiences and challenges faced by the Municipality of Cardona in participating in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) program, several recommendations can be made to improve the municipality’s future participation. Firstly, the municipality should prioritize efforts to enhance financial resources by seeking partnerships, grants, and advocating for budget allocations that align with SGLG requirements. This will provide the necessary funding to implement projects and initiatives aligned with the program’s criteria.

Secondly, the municipality should invest in capacity building programs to improve staff training and orientation, ensuring that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet SGLG requirements effectively. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs focused on governance practices, data management, and compliance.

Thirdly, the municipality should focus on improving data management systems to ensure efficient data collection, analysis, and reporting. Implementing robust data management systems and regular data quality checks will enhance the accuracy and



reliability of the information provided during the assessment process. Additionally, streamlining documentation processes by providing clear guidelines and templates will simplify the preparation of accurate and comprehensive submissions.

Furthermore, allocating dedicated resources and time specifically for the SGLG assessment will enable the municipality to manage the workload effectively and meet the program's deadlines without compromising the quality of submissions. The municipality should also continue to foster collaboration and stakeholder engagement by actively involving community organizations, government agencies, and private entities. Establishing platforms for regular dialogue, knowledge sharing, and incorporating diverse perspectives will ensure meaningful participation and improve governance practices.

Lastly, promoting a culture of continuous improvement by celebrating achievements, encouraging innovation, and implementing feedback mechanisms will foster a mindset of growth and development within the municipality. By implementing these recommendations, the Municipality of Cardona can strengthen its participation in the SGLG program and enhance its governance practices for the benefit of its constituents.

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