Voluntary Local Review 2025
City of Surigao, Philippines

Greetings!

It is with great honor that the City of Surigao presents its inaugural Report on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Voluntary Local Review (VLR). This first-ever review underscores our commitment to Sustainable Developmetal Goals localization, highlighting a comprehensive assessment of the performance of selected SDGs for the city.

We ventured into the SDG-VLR and other attendant programs in partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in the Philippines, who provided technical support as we went through the process of SDG Localization and implementing projects on housing and resilience.

The Philippines has committed to realize the SDGs as it impacts on the lives of Filipinos. The challenge is in ensuring that national government mechanisms would cascade SDG tracking through the various levels of governance from the national, the regional, provincial, the cities and municipalities, and even down to the villages. In the City of Surigao, we did not stop at reaching the village, or the barangay as we call it in the Philippines, but we brought the SDGs down to the level of households and families, by engaging families to monitor their individual SDGs and act on them with the support of local stakeholders. Apart from the downstream localization of the SDGs to families, the Surigao SDG Localization projects upscaled the VLR to include the provincial and regional level.

This is our city's proud contribution to the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. We would like to thank all those who made the implementation of this project a success, especially the technical personnel from all our departments and most especially to the UN-Habitat Philippines. Equally worth noting is the contributions made by our development partners: the community stakeholders from the private sector, the civil society, and the academia.

We acknowledge that the overall objective of achieving the SDGs remains a challenge. The evidence-based conduct of the Voluntary Local Review has underscored the multifaceted challenges confronting Surigao City as a growing city. Central to these is the city's population growth rate of 2.2%, which exceeds the national, regional, and provincial averages. This demographic trend signals both the dynamism of Surigao's development and the increasing demands it places on urban planning, infrastructure, social services, and sustainable resource management. Addressing these challenges is therefore critical to ensuring that the city's growth remains inclusive, resilient, and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals with the full cooperation of our partners.

PABLO YVES L. DUMLAO II
City Mayor

UN-HABITAT REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

UN-HABITAT

Greetings!

It is with pleasure that I congratulate the City Government of Surigao for completing its first Voluntary Local Review (VLR), a milestone that reflects the city's steadfast commitment to localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through inclusive, participatory, and evidence-based governance.

Surigao City stands as a trailblazer being the first local government in Mindanao and the Caraga Region to undertake a VLR process that embodies the spirit of multilevel governance.

This initiative has not only strengthened local accountability and community engagement but has also inspired policy coherence across jurisdictions. The city, being the capital of the Province of Surigao del Norte, has inspired the province to develop its provincial VLR which will be the first of its kind in the country. The SDG localization process is further upscaled as the Caraga Regional Development Council, of which the Province of Surigao del Norte is a part, adopted a resolution encouraging all its five constituent provinces and local governments to develop their own VLRs.

Moreover, Surigao City's approach demonstrates how SDG localization can be realized at every level — from city planning to family-level engagement, where the voices and aspirations of communities are heard and reflected in policy and action. The participatory People's Process approach to sustainable development-aligning global goals with local realities, down to the community level-ensured that no one and no place is left behind.

UN-Habitat is honored to work with Surigao City in developing the VLR and support its implementation through the Huy-anan nan Bajau sa Surigao Project, the Fostering COVID-19 Recovery and SDG Implementation Through Local Action Project and the Localize to Realize Project. I have personally visited the city and saw for myself how the family-level SDGs are empowering vulnerable families and transforming their lives. We commend Surigao City's leadership for showing how integrated and inclusive governance can drive transformation and resilience. May this VLR serve as an inspiration to other cities in the Philippines and the Asia and the Pacific to advance the SDGs through partnership, innovation, and solidarity.

MS.KAZUKO ISHIGAKI
Regional Director

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Basul island, Surigao city

Battle of Surigao Strait Memorial & Museum

AH26	-	Asian Highway 26
AICS	-	Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation
ATI	-	Agricultural Training Institute
ALS	-	Alternative Learning System
BFAR	-	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
CBMS	-	Comunity Based Monitoring System
CCTV	-	Closed Circuit Television
CDP	-	Comprehensive Development Plan
CDRA	-	Climate and Disaster Risk Assessment
CENRO	-	City Environment and Natural Resources Office
CHO	-	City Health Office
CITY AIP	-	City Annual Investment Plan
CLUP	-	Comprehensive Land Use Plan
CMO	-	City Mayor's Office
COVID 19	-	Coronavirus disease 2019
CPDO	-	City Planning and Development Office
CSO	-	Civil Society Organization
CSWDO	-	City Social Welfare and Development Office
CY	-	Calendar Year
DENR	-	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DENR-EMB	-	DENR-Environmental Management Bureau
DepEd	-	Department of Education
DHSUD	-	Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development
DICT	-	Department of Information and Communications Technology
DILG	-	Department of the Interior and Local Government
DND	-	Department of National Defense
DOH	-	Department of Health
DPWH	-	Department of Public Works and Highways
DRR CCA	-	Disaster Risk Reduction – Climate Change Adaptation
DRRMO	-	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office
DSWD	-	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ELA	-	Executive Legislative Agenda
ESWM	-	Ecological Solid Waste Management
FLUP	-	Forest Land Use Plan
GAD	-	Gender and Development
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GRDP	-	Gross Regional Domestic Product
HEI	-	Higher Education Institutions
HH	-	Household
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	-	Information and Communications Technology
IP	-	Indigenous People

|		
IRA	-	Internal Revenue Allotment
ISO	-	International Organization for Standardization
KALASAG	-	Kalamidad at Sakuna, Sariling Galing ang Kaligtasan
LCPC	-	Local Council for the Protection of Children
LGC	-	Local Government Code
LGU	-	Local Government Unit
LSB	-	Local School Board
LTPC	-	Livelihood Training and Productivity Center
MPA	-	Marine Protected Area
MRF	-	Materials Recovery Facility
NC II	-	National Certificate Level II
NCIP	-	National Commission on Indigenous People
NIA	-	National Irrigation Administration
NTA	-	National Tax Allocation
NIPAS	-	National Integrated Protected Area System
PCA	-	Philippine Coconut Authority
PCIC	-	Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation
PCV	-	Packed Cell Volume
PDPFP	-	Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan
Php	-	Philippine Peso
PIO	-	Philippine Information Office
PLGU	-	Provincial Local Government Unit
PNP	-	Philippine National Police
PRDP	-	Philippine Rural Development Program
PSA	-	Philippine Statistics Authority
RDP	-	Regional Development Plan
RORO	-	Roll-On Roll-Off
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goals
SDG FACES	-	SDG Family based Actions for Children and their Environs in Surigao
SDG VLR	-	SDG Voluntary Local Review
SEF	-	Special Education Fund
SMWD	-	Surigao Metropolitan Water District
SP	-	Sangguniang Panlungsod (City Council)
TESDA	-	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TWG	-	Technical Working Group
VAWC	-	Violence Against Women and Children
VLR	-	Voluntary Local Review
WHO	-	World Health Organization
4Ps	-	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Surigao City, located in northeastern Mindanao about 1,079 kilometers south of Manila, is a second-class city with a population of 171,107 based on the 2020 census. Serving as the economic and administrative hub of Surigao del Norte and the Caraga Region, its economy is anchored in mining, fisheries, trade, and tourism. In 2022, mining generated over ₱600 million in revenues, while fisheries sustained food security and coastal livelihoods. Trade reached ₱14.7 billion in gross sales, reinforcing the city's role as the province's commercial center.

Tourism continues to expand, with Surigao serving as the gateway to Siargao and Bucas Grande Islands, promoting sustainable livelihoods and local enterprise growth. Guided by the principles of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the city has integrated inclusive, resilient, and human-centered governance into its local development agenda. Its efforts were recognized globally when Mayor Pablo Yves L. Dumlao II presented Surigao City's first Voluntary Local Review (VLR) at the UN-Habitat Forum in Nairobi, underscoring the city's leadership in localizing global humanitarian and sustainability commitments to ensure that no one is left behind.

Map Showing the Position of Surigao City within the Caraga Region, Philippines

The Voluntary Local Review Project

Launched in April 2024, the Voluntary Local Review (VLR) Project of Surigao City was implemented in partnership with UN-Habitat Philippines, which provided technical assistance under the 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund Project titled "Fostering COVID-19 Recovery and SDG Implementation through Local Action in Asia-Pacific, Arab, and African Countries." The initiative marked a significant step in institutionalizing evidence-based local governance aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To ensure a whole-of-government and participatory approach, the City Government of Surigao established a Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of career personnel from various departments, along with representatives from national government agencies whose mandates are closely linked to the SDGs, particularly in key areas such as education, environment, and social development. To ensure a whole of government and participatory approach, the City Government of Surigao established a Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of career personnel from various departments,

along with representatives from national government agencies whose mandates are closely linked to the SDGs, particularly in key areas such as education, environment, and social development.

The project's implementation was characterized by a series of consultative and participatory meetings and workshops, which served as the foundation for data collection, policy alignment, and local indicator development. The outcomes of the VLR were presented to the city's high-level management and subsequently formally adopted by the City Development Council (CDC) as part of its local development policy framework. To reinforce collective ownership and accountability, a multi-sectoral dialogue was convened involving local and national government officials, business leaders, civil society organizations, and academic institutions. In addition, an inter-LGU dialogue was organized to encourage knowledge exchange and promote the replication of the VLR process across other local governments in the region, advancing the broader agenda of localizing the SDGs and fostering resilient, inclusive, and sustainable urban governance.

The Priority SDGs

The first Voluntary Local Review (VLR) conducted by the City of Surigao covered **11 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** that reflect the city's commitment to advancing inclusive, resilient, and sustainable local development. The selection of these SDGs was guided by the availability and reliability of local data, the alignment of city development priorities with global goals, and the need to ensure comprehensive representation across the key thematic pillars of the SDGs—social development, environmental management, economic growth, peace, and prosperity.

While not all global targets and indicators were fully represented, the city employed a combination of direct and proxy indicators to ensure meaningful analysis and evidence-based reporting, particularly for SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). This strategic and data-driven approach demonstrates Surigao City's proactive leadership in localizing the SDGs and strengthening the foundation for integrated, people-centered urban development.

Local Progress of the Priority SDGs

SDG-1 No Poverty. Poverty remains a key challenge for Surigao City under SDG 1, with 16.7% of families living below the international poverty line in 2023, well above the 5.4% national target and 35.5% still under the national poverty threshold despite a 13 point drop since 2017. Positive gains are evident in near universal access to drinking water (97.4%), sanitation (91.03%), skilled birth attendance (98.93%), antenatal care (98.93%), and postnatal checkups (91.07%). To address poverty, the local government increased spending on social services to 23.06% of total expenditures in 2023, up from 8.72% in 2021, while sustaining national programs like conditional cash transfers and promoting investments to generate jobs.

SDG-2 Zero Hunger. Under SDG 2, Surigao City recorded rising hunger from 2017 to 2023, with households experiencing food shortages increasing from 3.62% to 12.89%. Nutrition indicators show mixed result stunting prevalence rose from 6.9% in 2025 to 9.5% in 2023 but remained well below the 24.9% national target malnutrition among children dropped from 9.29% to 3.3%, slightly better than the 3.7% national target; and overweight prevalence decreased from 4.3% in 2022 to 3.65% in 2023. Efforts to combat malnutrition include supplemental feeding programs by both local and national governments, though these are limited to preschool and school-aged children.

SDG-3 Good Health and Well-Being. Surigao City's progress on SDG 3 reflects both setbacks and gains. Key mortality rates in 2023 under-five (11.87), neonatal (4.4), and infant (9.67) regressed from 2015 but Surigao City's progress on SDG 3 reflects both setbacks and gains. Key mortality rates in 2023 under-five (11.87), neonatal (4.4), and infant (9.67) remain better than national targets. Tuberculosis incidence rose sharply to 629 per 100,000, while contraceptive prevalence dropped to 35.99%, far below the 100% national target, and child immunization coverage declined to 73.33%. On the positive side, skilled birth attendants and facility based deliveries improved to 98.79%, HIV cases dropped from 180 in 2015 to 27 in 2023, and deaths from cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes significantly decreased. The city also sustained its malaria-free status. These mixed outcomes call for stronger disease prevention and reproductive health programs while sustaining gains in maternal and child health services.

SDG-4. Quality Education. Surigao City has made notable progress under SDG 4, with public schools achieving near universal access to electricity and handwashing facilities, alongside strong gains sanitation (95.45%) and high intenet access for elementary schools (90.91%). However, junior high schools lag with only 70.77% internet access,

and reading proficiency for Grades 2 and 3 remains critically low at just 55.67% and 55.69%. Education outcomes improved in elementary and junior high completion rates, but senior high completion and survival rates dipped, all still below the 100% national target. While the national government leads in education service delivery, local support through the School Board has been significant, with its budget growing by an average of 10.98% annually to ₱65.2 million in 2023. Strengthening literacy programs, improving internet connectivity in secondary schools, and addressing survival gaps are urgent priorities to accelerate progress toward inclusive and quality education.

SDG-5. GENDER EQUALITY. Surigao City has institutionalized gender equality and child protection frameworks through the establishment of a GAD Focal Point System, the enactment of its first Gender and Development (GAD) Code in 2007 (updated in 2024), and the local Code or the Protection of Children (updated in 2024). VAWC desks are operational in all 54 barangays, ensuring support mechanisms are in place.While reported cases of violence against women and children increased between 2015 and 2023. 19.82% for intimate partner violence and 35.41% for sexual or physical violence the proportion of affected women remains low at 0.60%, surpassing the 2030 national target of 10.6%. Despite meeting national benchmarks, the city emphasizes that prevention of VAWC remains a priority alongside the full implementation of protective ordinances and support services.

SDG-6. Clean water and Sanitation. Surigao City is prioritizing universal access to safe water sanitation by targeting the establishment of Level III Water Systems in all 54 barangays, ensuring treated water, distribution networks, and household taps. As of 2023, the Surigao Metropolitan Water District (SMWD) served 27,459 subscribers, while access to basic drinking water improved to 97.47% from 94.7% in 2017. Access to basic sanitation services also rose significantly to 91.03% from 76% in 2015. These gains indicate steady progress toward achieving SDG 6, though sustained investments are needed to ensure full coverage and system reliability.

SDG-11 Sustainable Cities and Communities. Surigao City, with 64.4% of its 171,107 residents in urban barangays, continues to urbanize rapidly, recording over 4% urban population growth from 2015–2020 while rural areas declined. Informal settlers decreased from 32% in 2015 to 20% in 2023, yet remain far above the national target of 1%. To address this, the city pursues housing and resettlement programs on city-owned land, complemented by private-sector partnerships for low-cost housing, and post-disaster resettlement support, including shelters for over 100 families displaced by Super Typhoon Rai in cooperation with UN-IOM. Efforts also include resilient settlements for the Sama Bajau, a highly vulnerable indigenous coastal group.

Effective disaster risk reduction measures helped the city achieve zero casualties during Typhoon Rai, earning national recognition from the Office of Civil Defense in 2023 for excellence in DRRM, climate adaptation, and humanitarian assistance.

SDG- 13 Climate Action. Surigao City is advancing climate change action through a ridge to reef approach that integrates watershed protection, upland reforestation, forest park development, biodiversity conservation, and livelihood support for upland communities in partnership with national agencies and private groups. Its pollution control measures are anchored on a solid waste management program, with the city's sanitary landfill recognized by the DENR-EMB for outstanding practices. Institutional capacity has been strengthened with the creation of the City Environment and Natural Resources Office and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, Institutional capacity has been strengthened with the creation of the City Environment and Natural Resources Office and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, enabling the enactment of key local policies on forest land use, solid waste, and disaster risk reduction. These efforts reflect the city's proactive governance in addressing climate resilience and environmental sustainability.

SDG-14 Life below water. With 67% of its 54 barangays located in islands or coastal areas and a 246-km coastline, Surigao City is highly dependent on and vulnerable to its marine resources.To strengthen governance of its 542 sq. km municipal waters,the city has enacted zoning ordinances, including the establishment of a 1,461-hectare mariculture zone for species such as milkfish, shellfish, and seaweed, coupled with biodiversity conservation, water quality monitoring, and mangrove protection. Regular coastal management activities include cleanup drives, fisheries patrols, and mangrove propagation, with technical support from the DENR. While these initiatives highlight proactive marine resource governance, scaling up water quality testing and ecosystem monitoring remains critical for long-term sustainability.

SDG- 16 Peace, Justice and Strong institutions. Surigao City continues to advance good governance through peace and development initiatives, transparent leadership, and active citizen participation. Crime rates have steadily declined, with the average monthly crime rate dropping from 40 to 27 cases per 100,000 between 2019 and 2023, and household victimization falling from 0.91% in 2017 to 0.75% in 2023. Civic engagement has strengthened, as accredited civil society organizations grew by 11.18% from 2010−2022 and now hold voting seats in the Local Development Council and other special bodies, ensuring broad representation in policymaking. Gender equality in governance is also evident, with women comprising 55.12% of the local government workforce and 62% of department heads, underscoring the city's commitment to inclusive and equitable leadership.

SDG- 17 Partnership for the Goals. Surigao City demonstrates steady progress in domestic resource mobilization, with locally generated revenues averaging 22.48% of total LGU income from 2019–2023 and growing at 3.49% annually, slightly outpacing overall income growth of 3.12%. To reduce reliance on national tax shares to 60%, the city leverages both local and external resources, including ₱154.6 million for agriculture and fisheries projects in 2023, ₱279.2 million for social welfare and post-Typhoon Odette recovery (54% of which supported families with damaged homes), and ₱874.6 million for 65 infrastructure projects from partner agencies. Looking ahead, a ₱350 million World Bank supported farm to market road under the PRDP is in the pipeline. However, digital inclusion remains a challenge, with only 42.62% of households having internet access as of 2023.

Photo Credits: PIO Surigao – House Plan of Bajau Settlements

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Challenges were also encountered in the areas of data availability, analysis, and interpretation. Data gaps, especially for SDG indicators not commonly collected at the local level, posed limitations in measuring progress. While some indicators were available nationally, corresponding city-level data were often lacking, necessitating the use of proxy indicators to approximate local performance, particularly for SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Through a series of consultations and technical workshops, the project enhanced local capacities in data analysis and SDG monitoring, though certain targets were deferred for inclusion in future VLR cycles due to incomplete data sets.

Inter-agency coordination also presented difficulties, as some delays occurred in data sourcing and validation due to limited personnel and overlapping institutional priorities. While existing collaboration mechanisms were functional, continuous coordination and follow-up were necessary to ensure timely data provision and cooperation. This challenge, common in multi-agency initiatives, underscored the need for sustained collaboration and stronger institutional mechanisms for data sharing. Despite these constraints, the VLR process reinforced inter-departmental partnerships and promoted a culture of accountability and shared responsibility for SDG implementation.

Several enabling factors, however, contributed to the successful implementation of the VLR.

The city benefited from existing data systems such as annual accomplishment reports and an ecological profile, which facilitated baseline assessments. The strong management commitment of the Local Chief Executive and the City Legislative Council to the SDG agenda ensured the smooth mobilization of resources and collaboration among departments, national agencies, civil society, academia, and the private sector. The creation of a dedicated Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of career personnel strengthened institutional continuity for future VLRs. Most importantly, the strategic partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) provided the technical and financial assistance necessary to elevate the city's earlier localization efforts into a full-scale, globally aligned VLR—positioning Surigao City as a proactive leader in localizing the SDGs and advancing sustainable urban development in the region.

SDG-VLR Institutionalization and Sustainability

To ensure the continuity and sustainability of Surigao City's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the local government aims to institutionalize the SDG monitoring and Voluntary Local Review (VLR) process as a permanent component of its governance framework. The proposed local SDG Watch will be integrated into the city's planning, programming, and budgeting systems, enabling consistent tracking of progress across sectors. Institutionalizing this mechanism safeguards the SDG-VLR process from shifts in political leadership and ensures that sustainable development remains a long-term priority anchored in evidence-based policymaking and performance monitoring.

Cascading SDG Monitoring to the Household Level

Recognizing that the household is the primary unit where the impacts of development are most visible, Surigao City seeks to expand its SDG monitoring framework to the community and household levels. The city's Household Monitoring Scorecards on the SDGs, initially piloted among 80 families, demonstrated the potential for localized, people centered data collection. Under the SDG Localize to Realize(L2R) Project through the implementation of Family Actions for Children and their Environs in Surigao (FACES) activity, wherein mechanisms are being established to institutionalize and scale up this initiative beyond the project period. The local government plans to expand monitoring efforts to additional barangays, ensuring that the process transitions toward full local ownership and continues to inform inclusive and child-sensitive policy interventions.

Insights and Reflections on SDG Progress

The results of the first VLR reflect diverse levels of progress across the 11 SDGs assessed—highlighting areas of strong performance, as well as those requiring further action and policy attention. While some indicators show steady advancement, others reveal gaps that must be addressed through targeted interventions and strengthened partnerships. These findings reinforce the importance of sustained data generation, inter-agency collaboration, and continuous policy alignment to accelerate local progress toward the 2030 Agenda.

Photo credit :UN-Habitat & PSA

Local Action for Global Impact

Ultimately, the Surigao City VLR underscores the vital role of local governments as frontliners of sustainable development. The global call to "think globally, act locally" resonates strongly in this context, as the city's efforts demonstrate how local actions contribute directly to national and global SDG achievements. The transformation of communities begins at the local level—where the real impacts of development are measured in improved well-being, equitable access to opportunities, and the empowerment of individuals and families. Through institutionalized SDG tracking and inclusive local governance, Surigao City reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind in the journey toward a sustainable and resilient future.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The experience of Surigao City in preparing its first Voluntary Local Review (VLR) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provided valuable insights into the enabling conditions for successful SDG localization. Three critical factors emerged as key considerations for sustaining and replicating the process, both for future VLR cycles and for adoption by other local governments: (a) data, (b) development interventions or action agenda, and (c) sustainability.

Data

The SDG-VLR is inherently a data-driven undertaking, where the availability, accuracy, and consistency of data determine the credibility of local progress assessments. The experience underscored the importance of developing a robust local data ecosystem that integrates administrative, sectoral,

and community-based data sources. Surigao City recognizes that the sufficiency of disaggregated data is essential for capturing the realities on the ground and aligning local targets with national and global SDG indicators. Strengthening data management capacities and institutionalizing local SDG monitoring systems will ensure that policy decisions remain evidence-based and responsive to emerging development challenges.

Development Interventions

The initial assessment of the city's SDG performance revealed both progress and critical areas requiring intensified intervention. Key development concerns identified include poverty reduction, particularly in increasing household income; health outcomes, notably in maternal and child health care; food security and nutrition, addressing the incidence of hunger and malnutrition; education quality, reflected in data gaps in reading and mathematics proficiency; and the rise in gender-based violence cases. These findings point to the need for focused, cross-sectoral action plans and strengthened partnerships to accelerate progress toward the 2030 targets. The city's development agenda will continue to prioritize these areas through evidence-based programming and inclusive policy implementation.

In conclusion, Surigao City's first VLR has demonstrated that local action is central to global transformation. The lessons learned from this process highlight that effective data governance, targeted development interventions, and institutional sustainability form the foundation for achieving meaningful progress on the SDGs. These insights serve as a model for other local governments seeking to translate the global development agenda into concrete, measurable, and people-centered outcomes at the local level.

Milestones

The following are among the significant achievements of the project:

Pioneered the vertical integration of SDG localization across barangays, the province, the Caraga region, and up to the national level, with potential inclusion in the Philippines' VNR.

The SDG-VLR project created a new knowledge product that other local governments can learn from and implement on their own. The innovative process that the project went through offers learning opportunities for other local governments, community stakeholders including business and industry, civil society, and the academe.

Provided clear benchmarks and evidence-based indicators that strengthened local planning, inspired city departments, and motivated other LGUs to replicate the approach.

Complementing its ISO-certified quality management system with a pioneering SDG-VLR.

Innovation
The project is an innovative process that raised awareness and greater consciousness

Knowledge
The SDG-VLR project created a new SDGs both on the global and national scale

Motivation
The clear targets and indicators of the SDGs both on the global and national scale

Image Promotion
The SDG-VLR is a pioneering engagement that connotes positivity

Barangay Mabua , Surigao City

I.INTRODUCTION

I-1
Brief City Profile

The City of Surigao, located at the northeastern tip of Mindanao, the Philippines' second largest island, is a small but fast-growing urban center with a population of 171,107 based on the 2020 census. Despite its modest size, the city recorded a 2.2% annual population growth rate from 2015 to 2020—well above the national average of 1.63%—reflecting its increasing economic dynamism and urban appeal. Approximately 64.4% of its population resides in urban areas, with a tempo of urbanization of 5.42 for the same period, indicating steady urban expansion and development pressure. See *Figure 1.*

Surigao City covers a total land area of 24,534 hectares, characterized by a non-contiguous geography. Of its 54 barangays, 21 are located across 17 islands and islets within its jurisdiction. This distinct spatial configuration presents unique governance and service delivery challenges, particularly in ensuring inclusive access to basic services, infrastructure, and livelihood opportunities across both mainland and island communities. The city's topography is generally rolling, with flat coastal areas supporting settlements, commerce, and port-related activities that drive local economic growth.

Figure 1. Location Map
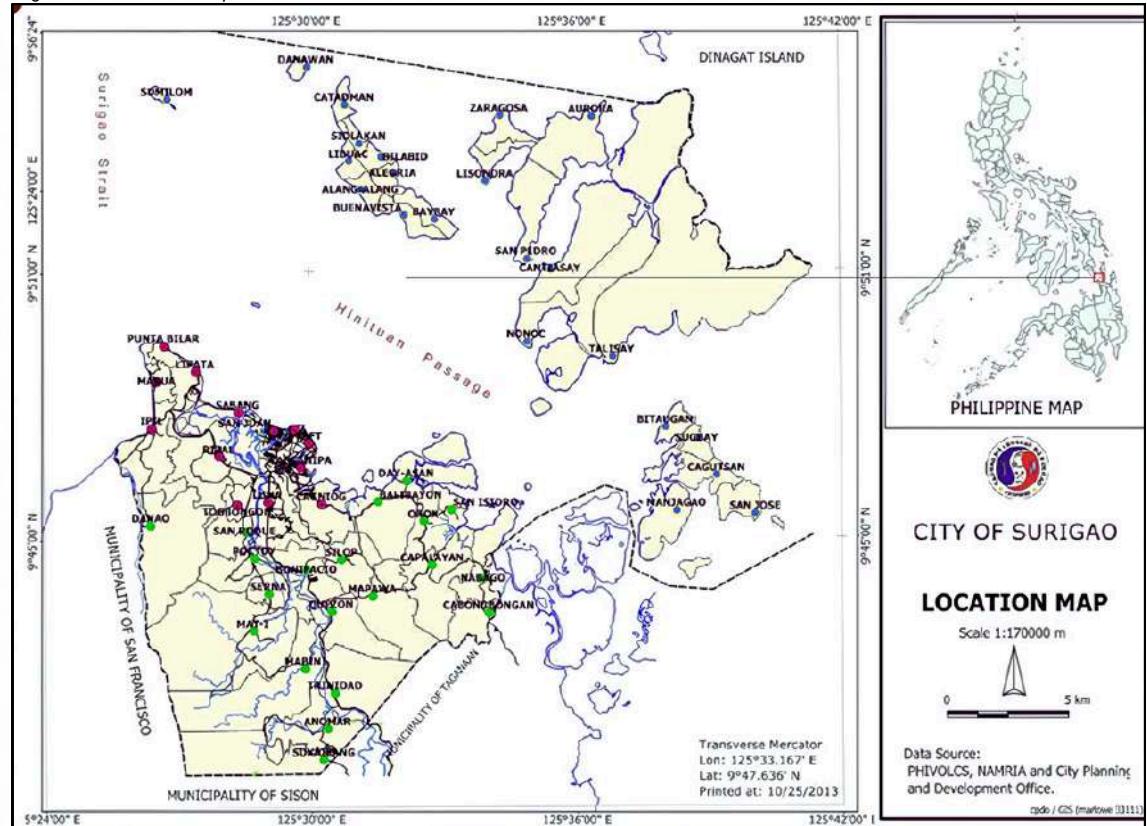
Economically, Surigao exhibits a predominantly service-oriented profile, with 87% of its workforce engaged in the tertiary sector, underscoring its role as the administrative, commercial, and service hub of the province. The primary sector—comprising agriculture, fisheries, mining, and quarrying—accounts for only 4% of employment, while the secondary sector of construction, manufacturing, and industry represents 9%. Chartered as a city on August 31, 1970, Surigao serves as the capital of the Province of Surigao del Norte, functioning as the region's economic gateway and center for governance, education, and trade in northeastern Mindanao. See *Figure 2.*

Figure 2. Employment Distribution Chart
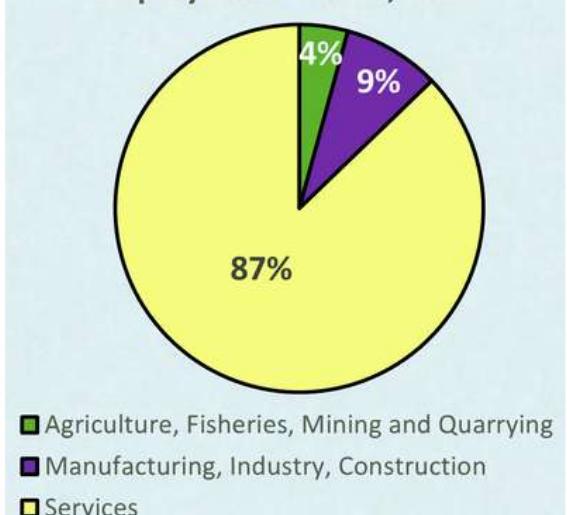
Photo credit : PIO Surigao

I-2.
The City's Comparative Advantages

Mineral resource base for long-term industrial and commercial development.
Surigao City possesses abundant mineral resources that provide a strong foundation for long-term, resource-based industrial investment. The area is rich in both metallic and non-metallic minerals, including gold, nickel, chromite, silica, and limestone. Notably, Surigao holds more than 80% of the known nickel deposits in the Philippines, ranking fourth largest in Asia. As part of the province recognized as the mining center of Mindanao, Surigao del Norte has seen significant export growth—from US$340 million in 2007 to US$674.08 million in 2019, primarily from nickel ore, mixed nickel-cobalt sulfide, and scandium oxalate. The city also hosts a 109-hectare proclaimed Special Economic Zone for heavy industries in Nonoc Island, further strengthening its position as a hub for mineral-based economic activities.

Agricultural and fishery resources ripe for commercial expansion.
Beyond mining, Surigao's fisheries and agriculture sectors present significant opportunities for sustainable and inclusive growth. The city serves as a primary fish landing center in Northeastern Mindanao and is among the country's top producers of high-value and live marine species, supplying Caraga Region and neighboring Regions X and XI. With over 1,461 hectares across four coastal barangays designated as a marine culture park, Surigao is strategically positioned to expand its mariculture and aquaculture industries. Additionally, vast tracts of underutilized agricultural land are available for commercial farming, livestock, and poultry ventures.

Local demand—estimated at over 5,000 metric tons of meat products per year—underscores strong market potential for agribusiness and food production initiatives that strengthen local food security and supply chains.

Strategic urban and economic positioning.
Surigao City's strategic geographic location amplifies its role as an emerging urban service center and regional growth node. Identified as one of Mindanao's 11 regional growth centers under the Mindanao Spatial Strategy and Development Framework Plan (2015–2045), it serves a broad influence area encompassing the provinces of Surigao del Norte, Dinagat Islands, Southern Leyte, Agusan del Norte, and Surigao del Sur. Its position along the Pan-Philippine Highway (AH26) provides a vital land-sea link between Mindanao and the rest of the Philippines, enhancing its logistics and connectivity profile. Driven by steady population growth (2.2%), rising annual purchasing power exceeding ₱14 billion, and an expanding housing demand of over 5,000 units, Surigao presents a vibrant environment for real estate, tourism, and commercial development.

Investment-friendly governance and quality management systems.
The city's strong governance framework complements its economic potential. A two-time Seal of Good Local Governance awardee, Surigao upholds transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public service delivery. The City Investment Incentive Code offers 3–10 years of business tax holidays to qualified investors,

while compliance with the Anti-Red Tape Act (R.A. 9485) and the Ease of Doing Business Law (R.A. 11032) ensures a streamlined, transparent business environment. Thirteen city departments are already ISO 9001:2015 certified, institutionalizing quality management systems and continuous process improvement. These reforms reflect Surigao City's commitment to maintaining an investor-friendly climate, aligned with global standards of good governance and sustainable local development. *See Figure 3.*

Figure 3. Surigao City Comparative Advantages

The Surigao Advantage

Resource-Based Potentials
Investment opportunities in agriculture, fisheries, livestock, mineral processing, tourism

Quality Management Systems
13 front line offices certified under ISO 9001:2015

Choice Investment Location
P12.8 billion in gross sales (2023)
P2.651 billion new investments (2019-2023)

Top Tourist Destination
312,195 arrivals in 2019 Pre-Covid

Stable Peace and Order
26.83 Average Monthly Crime Rate per 100,000 population (2023)


Photo credit : PIO Surigao-Silop Cave

I-3
Spatial Development and Functional Role

The Mindanao Spatial Strategy/Development Framework Plan (2015–2045) adopts a multi-nodal development approach that identifies major growth centers across the island. Within this framework, Surigao City is recognized as one of 11 Regional Growth Centers, positioned to serve as the trading and logistics hub of the Pacific Rim in the Caraga Region. This role reflects the city's growing economic importance as a link between Mindanao and the rest of the country. Surigao functions as a special zone for mineral-based industries and a trans-shipment hub for goods moving to and from Agusan del Norte, other Mindanao provinces, and the rest of the Philippines. Its airport and seaports enable efficient trade and mobility, while its proximity to Siargao and Bucas Grande Islands strengthens its function as a tourism gateway for domestic and international visitors.

Under the Caraga Regional Development Plan (RDP), the city is designated as a Sub-Regional Center, serving as the commercial and trading core of the northeastern seaboard and a processing center for minerals and fishery resources. This positioning enhances the city's role in promoting value-added production and supporting regional industry growth.

Consistent with the Mindanao spatial framework, Surigao City is also identified in the Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan (PDPFP) as the primary urban service center and a key area for mineral processing and industrial activity. As the provincial capital of Surigao del Norte, it plays a central role in providing administrative, commercial, and institutional services to surrounding municipalities.

Nationally, Surigao City's strategic location makes it a vital land-sea gateway to Mindanao, connecting the island through Roll-on/Roll-off (RORO) routes to the eastern seaboard, Luzon, and the National Capital Region.

With its strong base in mining, fisheries, and tourism, the city serves as a vital driver of regional industrialization and trade, contributing to balanced national development and advancing the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Figure 4. Mindanao Spatial Strategy/Development Framework, Overall Spatial Strategy
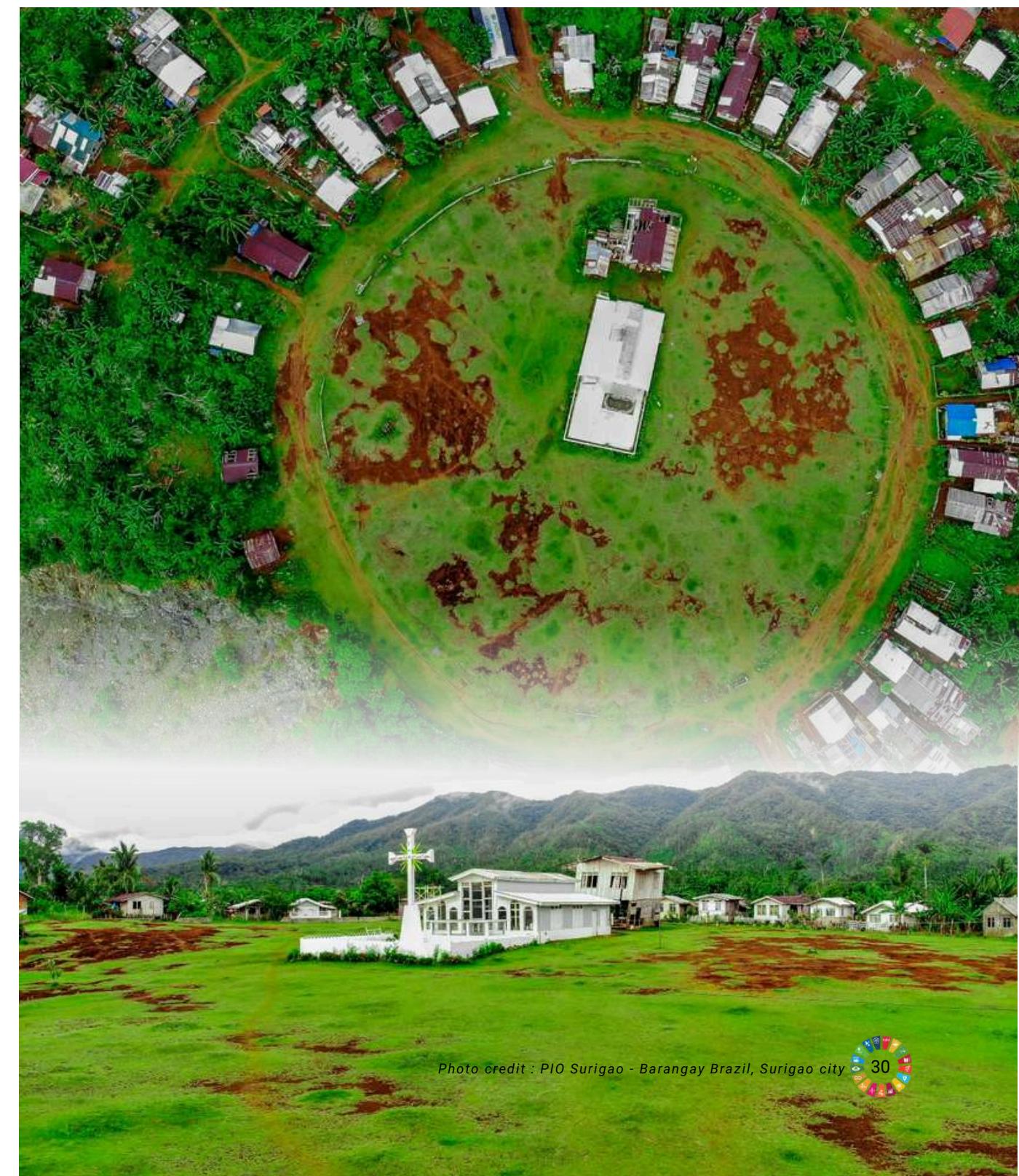
*Photo credit : PIO Surigao - Barangay Brazil, Surigao city*
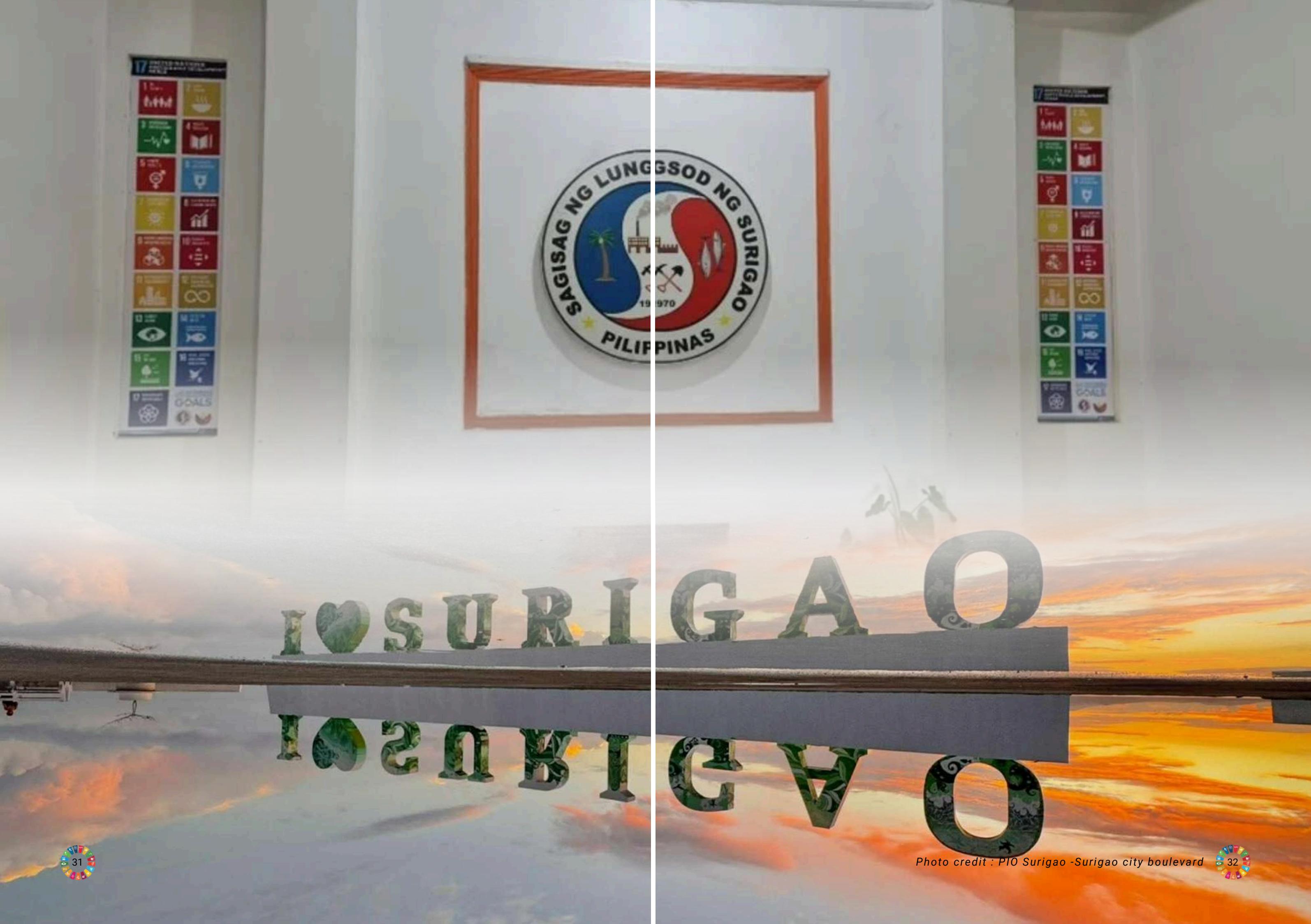
II. SURIGAO CITY'S SDG-VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW PROJECT

In March 2024, following a consultation with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the City of Surigao formally committed to undertake its first Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The initiative was officially launched the following month through a partnership with UN-Habitat under the 2030 Agenda framework, signifying the city's proactive commitment to localizing and institutionalizing the SDGs. This partnership positioned Surigao among the pioneering Philippine cities advancing evidence-based and inclusive local governance aligned with global development principles.

The city's decision to pursue the VLR reflected its determination to align local development priorities with the global SDG framework and establish formal monitoring mechanisms to track progress at the city level. The initiative came at a pivotal time, coinciding with the transition to a new city administration and the updating of key local planning instruments—the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) and the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). Through this process, Surigao City strengthened policy coherence and data-driven decision-making, ensuring that sustainable, resilient, and inclusive development remains central to its long-term urban transformation agenda.
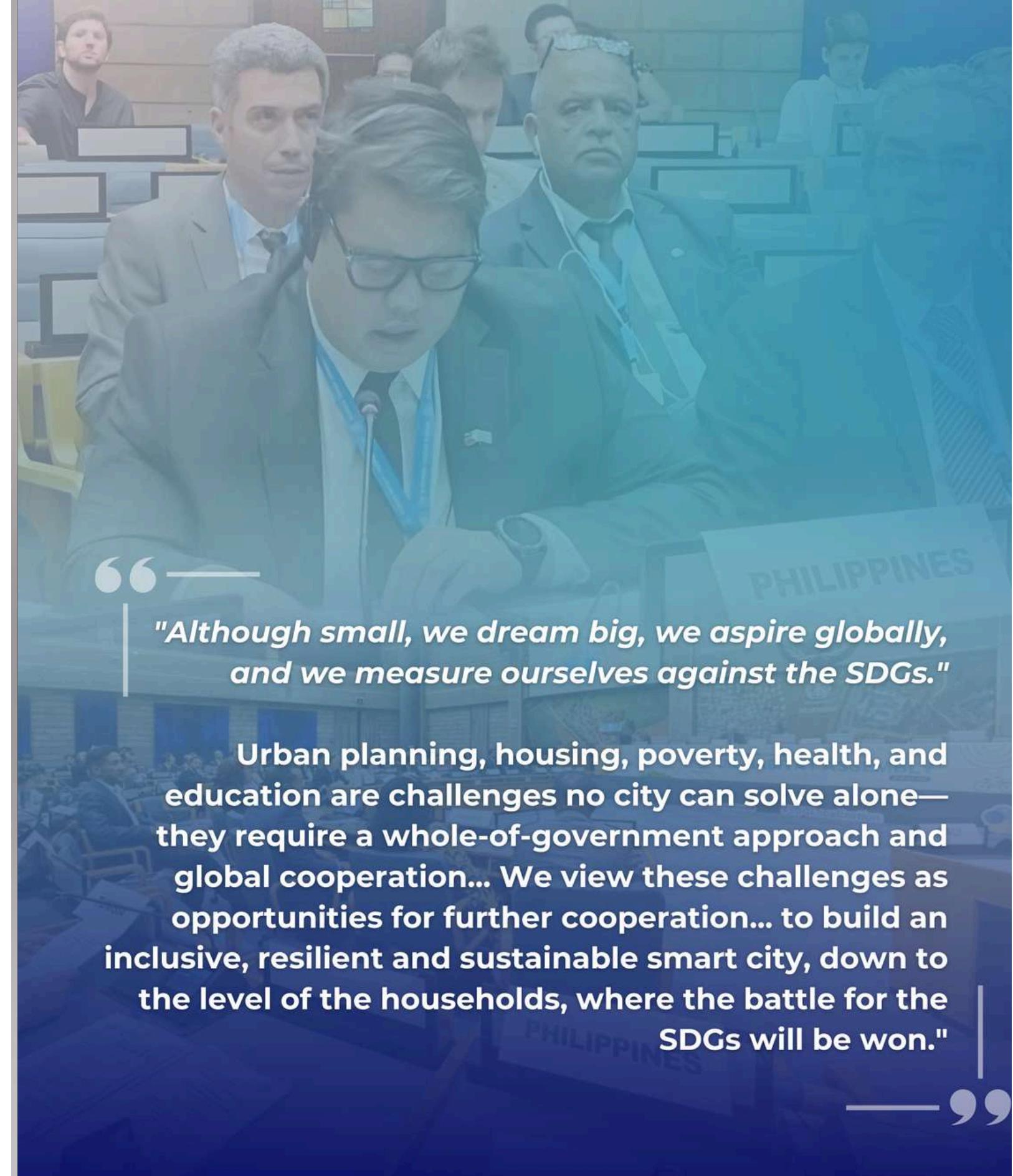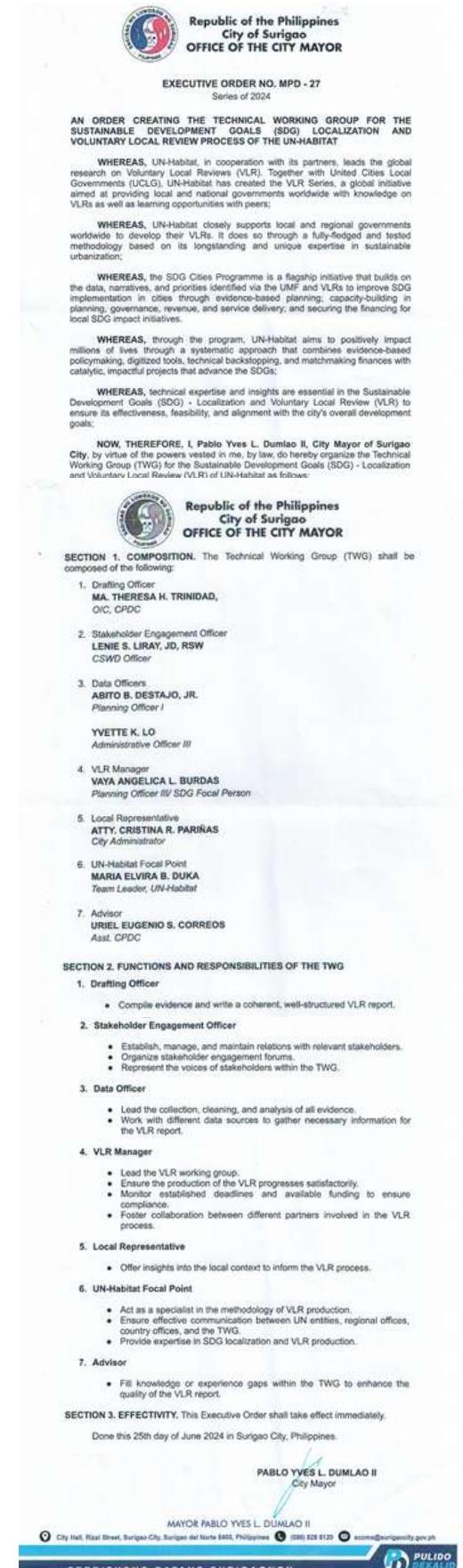
> "Although small, we dream big, we aspire globally, and we measure ourselves against the SDGs."
>
> Urban planning, housing, poverty, health, and education are challenges no city can solve alone— they require a whole-of-government approach and global cooperation... We view these challenges as opportunities for further cooperation... to build an inclusive, resilient and sustainable smart city, down to the level of the households, where the battle for the SDGs will be won."

Photo credit : PIO surigao
Mayor Pablo Yves L. Dumlao, *during the Special Event & Reception on Multi Governance for SDG Localization - Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly. May 28, in Nairobi.*

III. THE VLR PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of the City of Surigao followed a structured, participatory, and data-driven process consistent with global and national SDG reporting frameworks. The methodology revolved around a series of consultative meetings, workshops, and data assessment activities, anchored on the Technology of Participation (ToP) approach commonly used in local development planning. The process spanned approximately one year, beginning with the initial coordination meeting in March 2024 and culminating in the publication and launch of the VLR Report in April 2025. This participatory approach ensured inclusivity, transparency, and ownership among local stakeholders.

The assessment phase began with preliminary consultations, stocktaking of existing local development plans, and alignment of these with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The process examined vertical linkages between the city's plans and higher-level frameworks, including the Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan (PDPFP) of Surigao del Norte, the Caraga Regional Development Plan (RDP), and the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023–2028. To institutionalize the initiative, the city established a Technical Working Group (TWG) and designated a Project Focal Person through an executive order issued by the City Mayor, ensuring strong leadership and coordination throughout the process.

The data collection and assessment phase involved identifying, sourcing, and consolidating relevant data to measure performance across the 17 SDGs. The city adopted the SDG Watch tool—used nationally by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)—as the principal framework for organizing and analyzing SDG indicators, national targets, and local trends. This phase enabled the TWG to determine data sufficiency and identify areas where proxy indicators could supplement limited datasets, particularly for locally specific SDG metrics.

During the data analysis and prioritization phase, SDGs and indicators with sufficient and reliable data were prioritized. These were cross-referenced with the city's existing planning instruments, including the Executive-Legislative Agenda (ELA) for short-term goals, the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) for medium-term strategies, and the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) for long-term development directions.

The analysis focused on four key dimensions: (**1**) alignment of local goals with the SDGs, (**2**) consistency with spatial and functional development priorities, (**3**) data availability, and (**4**) feasibility of using localized proxy indicators.

The City's Comparative Advantages

21 March 2024	First coordination meeting conducted
VLR Project Launching	**23 April 2024**
24 April 2024	VLR Project Orientation with Cit'y Department Heads
SDG Stakeholders' Forum	**9 October 2024**
9 November 2024	Orientation on the SDG-VLR Toolkit
SDG Prioritization Workshop	**13 January 2025**
07 March 2025	Presentation of priority SDG data and validation
Dialogue on the VLR and Stakeholders Commitment to Localization	**April 2025**

IV. THE SURIGAO CITY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Development planning in the City of Surigao began in 1974, four years after its formal chartering as a city on August 31, 1970. The city's first long-term vision was articulated in the City Development Plan (1990–1995), marking the beginning of systematic planning and vision-driven governance. Over the years, this vision has undergone several updates to reflect emerging socio-economic priorities, environmental challenges, and governance reforms. The current vision, adopted through the latest planning cycle, declares: "With the blessings of Divine Providence, Surigao in 2040: a smart city of resilient people, guided by good governance, competitive with sustainable economy and sound environmental management." This vision underscores the city's aspiration to harness Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as the backbone of a smart city framework—enabling data-driven governance, improved public service delivery, and enhanced citizen participation. ICT integration is envisioned to strengthen transparency, ensure efficient public utilities and transportation systems, improve public safety, and promote environmental sustainability and resource management.

In *Figure 6*, the city's development vision rests on five interlinked development pillars that serve as the foundation for its long-term growth trajectory:

- **Economy** – Economic Development
- **People** – Social Development
- **Infrastructure** – Built Environment
- **Governance** – Institutional Development/Local Governance
- **Environment** – Natural Environment

The city's Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) and Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) operationalize this vision through sectoral and sub-sectoral goals, ensuring coherence between strategic planning and implementation. Collectively, these frameworks guide Surigao's transformation into a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable smart city aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the national long-term vision of Ambisyon Natin 2040.

Figure 6. Summary of SDG Alignment with the Local Development Framework, City of Surigao

Local Development Sector	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)
Economic Development	1 NO POVERTY · 2 ZERO HUNGER · 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH · 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE · 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES · 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION · 14 LIFE BELOW WATER · 15 LIFE ON LAND
Social Development	1 NO POVERTY · 2 ZERO HUNGER · 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING · 4 QUALITY EDUCATION · 5 GENDER EQUALITY · 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS · 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES · 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Infrastructure Development	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION · 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY · 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE · 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Institutional Development/Local Governance	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH · 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES · 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS · 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
Environmental Management	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES · 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION · 13 CLIMATE ACTION · 14 LIFE BELOW WATER · 15 LIFE ON LAND

V. THE SDG ALIGNMENT WITH THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

To provide a solid foundation for the conduct of the Sustainable Development Goals Voluntary Local Review (SDG-VLR) in the City of Surigao, an initial assessment was undertaken to determine the degree of alignment between the SDGs and the city's two primary mandated local development plans under the Local Government Code—the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) and the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). This assessment aimed to evaluate how local development priorities reflect and contribute to the achievement of the global goals. The results revealed that all 17 SDGs, at least at the level of their overarching objectives, are broadly aligned with the city's long-term development framework, particularly its 2040 vision and the five sectoral pillars—Economy, People, Infrastructure, Governance, and Environment—that serve as the foundation of the city's strategic direction (*Figure 7*). The analysis also revealed multiple intersections among certain SDGs and local sectoral priorities. SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) was found to cut across all five sectors, reinforcing its integrative role in urban sustainability.

SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) align strongly with both the economic and social development dimensions, while SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) connects the city's goals in economic growth and infrastructure development. Similarly, SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) aligns with the social and governance sectors, reflecting the city's emphasis on inclusive institutions and participatory governance. Finally, SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land) are directly linked with the environmental and economic pillars, highlighting the city's commitment to sustainable resource management. Other SDGs demonstrate single-sector alignment but collectively reinforce the coherence between local priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Figure 7 : The following framework diagram shows the various goals and their relationship to the individual vision pillars.

With the blessings of the Divine Providence, Surigao in 2040: a smart city of resilient people, guided by good governance, competitive with sustainable economy and sound environmental management.

| ECONOMY	PEOPLE	INFRASTRUCTURE	GOVERNANCE	ENVIRONMENT
High & sustained economic growth.	Improved quality of life with expanded & equitable access to basic social and related support services.	Improved urban and rural infrastructure & utilities.	Transparent & accountable governance institutionalized.	Ecological balance maintained & preserved
Agricultural lands and marine resources optimally utilized.	Community health status uplifted.	Integrated, efficient and reliable transport system established.	Reduced dependency from share of NTA	Forest lands, coastal and marine resources properly managed.
Developed mining and fishery industries.	Expanded access to basic education and sustained delivery of support services.	Global communication links established and widely accessible.	Human resource development program strengthened.	Integrated Solid Waste Management System effectively managed.
Tourism destination and service center in the Mindanao Pacific Rim.	Reduced housing backlog.	Level III water system established in all barangays.	Civil society and private sector participation strengthened and expanded.	Biodiversity preserved and protected.
	Sustained peace and order.	All barangays energized.	System of checks and balances improved.	CDRA integrated into LGU plans, policies & programs.
	Improved social and economic status of the poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged sectors.			

Photo credits : PIO Surigao city - localized To Realize theme activity was held at the Surigao City Gymnasium

VI. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND PRIORITY SDGs FOR VLR

While the alignment of Surigao City's local development framework with all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been established, the Technical Working Group (TWG) for the SDG-Voluntary Local Review (VLR) recommended that the initial review focus on nine (9) priority SDGs, namely:

SDG 1 - No Poverty
SDG 2 - Zero Hunger
SDG 3 - Good Health and Well Being
SDG 4 - Quality Education
SDG 5 - Gender Equality
SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation
SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities
SDG 13 - Climate Action
SDG 14 - Life Below Water

These goals were selected primarily based on data availability, with the city's readiness to provide measurable indicators supported by established reporting mechanisms and validated through the annual accomplishment reports of relevant departments and offices.

The prioritization process also considered the alignment of SDG indicators with the targets set in the city's Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) and Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP), as well as the city's spatial and functional role within the Mindanao, regional, and provincial contexts. The chosen nine SDGs reflect the city's core development priorities in economic growth, social development, infrastructure, and environmental management, while recognizing the need to strengthen monitoring for governance and institutional performance. To ensure a holistic approach, the TWG emphasized that the selected indicators collectively represent all five SDG thematic areas—People (social development), Planet (environmental sustainability), Prosperity (economic growth), Peace, and Partnerships—thereby enabling the inclusion of governance-related measures such as fiscal management, transparency, and civic participation.

Recognizing this, the city proactively expanded its scope to include SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) to ensure that the city's five (5) development pillars are fully represented across the five thematic areas of the SDGs.

This inclusion not only enhances the comprehensiveness of the VLR but also reinforces the city's commitment to good governance, participatory leadership, and effective partnerships for sustainable development. See *Figure 8*.

Figure 8. Priority SDGs Distribution vs. Thematic Areas
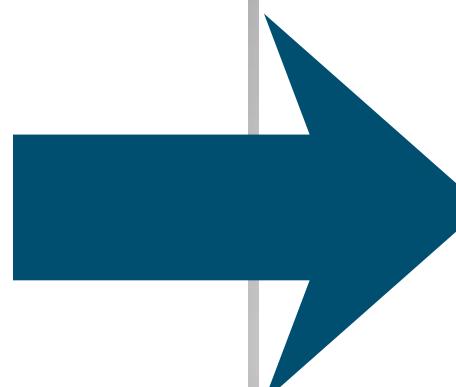
Figure 9. Local Development Goals and Priority SDGs Matrix

Local Development Sector/Sub sector	Major and Sub-sector goals	Priority SDGs for VLR
Economic Development	High & sustained economic growth	1 NO POVERTY
Agriculture and Fisheries	Agricultural lands and marine resources optimally utilized	1 NO POVERTY / 2 ZERO HUNGER
Industry	Agriclrural lands and marine resources optimally utilized	14 LIFE BELOW WATER
Services	Tourism destination and service center in the Mindanao Pacific rim	1 NO POVERTY / 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Social development	Improved quality of life with expanded and equitable access to basic social and related support services	1 NO POVERTY
Health	Community health status uplifted	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
Education	Expanded access to basic education and sustained delivery of support services.	4 QUALITY EDUCATION / 5 GENDER EQUALITY
Housing	Reduced housing backlog.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES / 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
Peace & Security	Sustained peace and order.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Social Welfare	Improved social and economic status of the poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged sectors.	1 NO POVERTY / 5 GENDER EQUALITY
Infrastructure Development	Improved urban and rural infrastructure & utilities.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Transportation	Integrated, efficient and reliable transport system established.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Communications	Global communication links established and widely accessible.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Water System	Level III water system established in all barangays	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION / 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Energy	All barangays (villages) energized.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Institutional Development	Transparent & accountable governance institutionalized.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES / 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS / 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
Fiscal Administration	Reduced IRA dependence.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES / 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
Human Resource	Human resource development program established.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES / 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
People Empowerment	Civil society and private sector participation strengthened and expanded.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES / 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
Accountability	System of checks and balances improved.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Environmental Management	Ecological balance maintained & preserved	13 CLIMATE ACTION 14 LIFE BELOW WATER
Natural Resources Management	Forest lands, coastal and marine resources properly managed.	14 LIFE BELOW WATER
Solid Waste Management	Integrated Solid Waste Management System effectively managed.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Ecosystems Management	Biodiversity preserved and protected.	13 CLIMATE ACTION 14 LIFE BELOW WATER
Disaster Risk Reduction & Management	CDRA integrated into LGU plans, policies & programs.	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 13 CLIMATE ACTION

Figure 9 highlights key opportunities for strengthening the alignment between the priority Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the City of Surigao's local development goals. While the initial nine (9) SDGs provided a strong foundation, areas within institutional development—such as fiscal administration, human resource management, transparency, and accountability—present opportunities for further integration. In addition, the city identified ways to improve the measurement of economic progress under SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), where traditional indicators like Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are currently available only at regional and national levels. This presents an opportunity to develop localized metrics and proxy indicators that better reflect the city's economic performance and resilience.

These refinements underscore the city's adaptive approach to continuous improvement in data systems, monitoring, and reporting. Moving forward, future iterations of the VLR will build upon these lessons, enhancing the city's capacity to generate localized data, deepen SDG integration, and sustain evidence-based policymaking in pursuit of inclusive and resilient growth.

Photo credit : PIO Surigao- JCI conducted a mangrove planting activity in Sitio Panubigon, Barangay Lipata, Surigao City

Bajau new house settlements in Sitio panubigon, Barangay Lipata, Surigao

SDG 1 NO POVERTY : *End poverty in all its forms everywhere.*

Poverty reduction remains the central thrust of the City of Surigao's development agenda, guiding the design and implementation of all local plans, programs, and initiatives. The city's interventions prioritize improving the quality of life for all Surigaonons, particularly those in vulnerable conditions such as individuals in crisis, victims of calamities, the poorest households, senior citizens, and other marginalized groups. Under SDG 1, five (5) targets and nineteen (19) indicators are being tracked to monitor progress toward poverty alleviation.

Poverty incidence mapping reveals that the highest concentrations of poverty are found in the island barangays, as shown in *Figures 10 and 11*, where geographic isolation limits access to livelihood and social services. In contrast, Sitio Sumilom in Barangay Lipata records the lowest incidence at 28.6%, attributed to its proximity to the mainland and better access to income-generating opportunities. Meanwhile, the island barangays of Lisondra (92.4%) and Alang-alang (88.5%) in Cluster 1 reflect the most severe levels of deprivation, underscoring the geographic inequality between mainland and island communities.

Figure 10. Households with Income Below the National Poverty Line (Island Cluster 1)
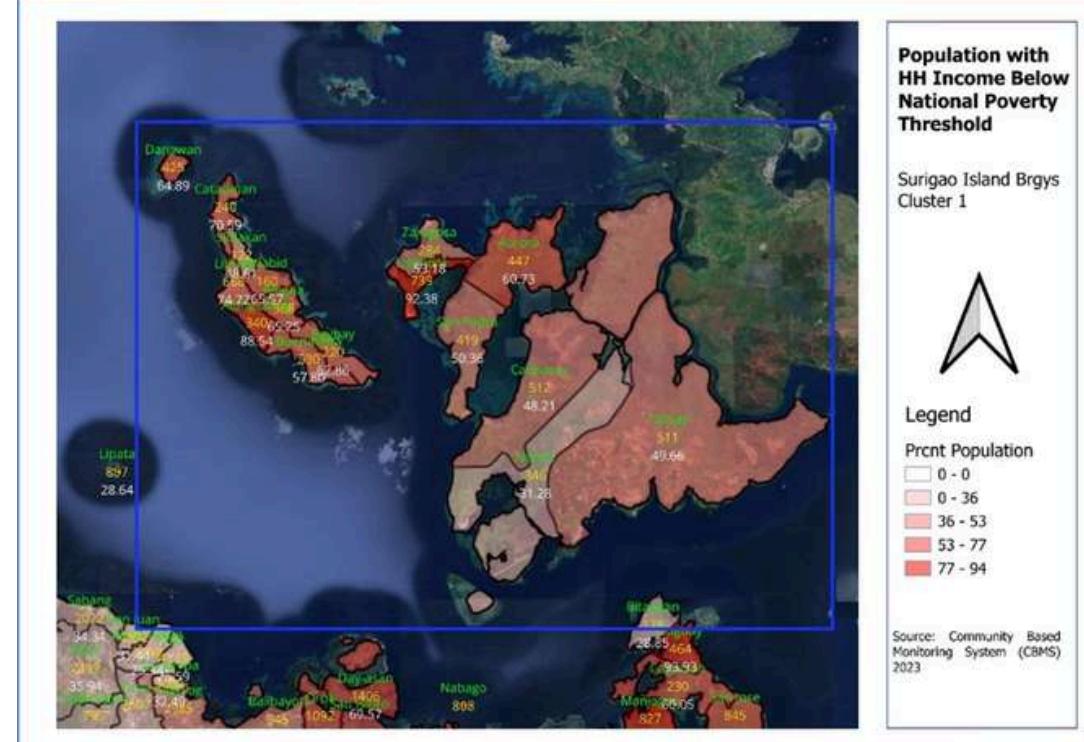
In Cluster 2, similarly alarming poverty rates were recorded, including Sugbay (93.35%) and Manjagao (81.1%), with Bitaugan showing the lowest incidence at 28.4%.

On the mainland, poverty levels are generally lower but still exhibit spatial variation.

The western barangays of the urban core under Mainland Cluster 1 (*Figure 12*) show that Punta Bilar has the highest incidence at 74.1%, while San Roque (26.7%) and Lipata (23.6%) register the lowest. These patterns highlight the need for targeted interventions that address spatial disparities,

improve livelihood opportunities in remote areas, and enhance access to basic services. The city's poverty reduction strategy therefore emphasizes localized, data-driven approaches to ensure that growth is inclusive, and no community is left behind.

Figure 11. Households with Income Below the National Poverty Line (Island Cluster 2)

Figure 12. Households with Income Below the National Poverty Line (Mainland Cluster 1)

The mainland barangays located east-southeast of the urban center (*Figure 13 and Figure 14*) exhibit relatively higher poverty incidences compared to other mainland areas. The barangays of Orok (76.5%) and Nabago (72.47%) register some of the highest rates, largely reflecting their dependence on agriculture and fisheries—sectors vulnerable to market fluctuations and climate variability. In contrast, the central urban barangays of Washington (25.3%), Taft (25.5%), Luna (22.4%), San Juan (31.4%), and Canlanipa (32.4%) record lower poverty levels, consistent with their greater access to employment, services, and infrastructure. In Mainland Cluster 3 (Figure 14), Mat-i (24.4%) and Sukailang (27.3%) show relatively lower incidences, while neighboring upland barangays such as Mabini (43%) and Anomar (39.1%) reflect higher vulnerability, possibly due to limited accessibility and livelihood diversification.

The eastern and upland communities like Orok and Nabago rely primarily on subsistence farming and small-scale fishing, where income is highly seasonal and sensitive to typhoons, flooding, and fluctuating commodity prices. Limited infrastructure—such as farm-to-market roads, post-harvest facilities, and reliable transport—further constrains their capacity to access markets and social services. Conversely, urban barangays such as Washington and Taft benefit from diversified economic opportunities in commerce, transport, and government services, enabling more stable and higher household incomes. The pattern suggests that poverty in these peripheral barangays is not only a function of income but also of spatial disadvantage, inadequate connectivity.

Figure 13. Households with Income Below the National Poverty Line (Mainland Cluster 2)

Figure 14. Households with Income Below the National Poverty Line (Mainland Cluster 3)
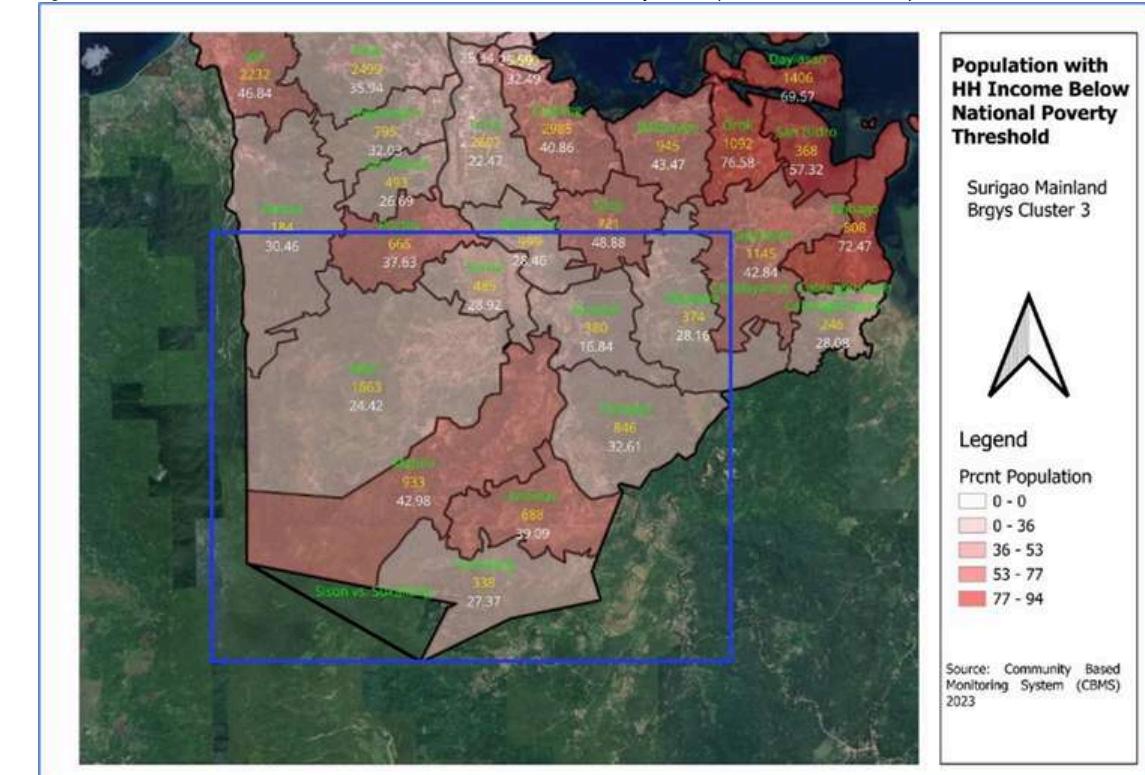
Figure 15. Poverty Indicators

Indicator	Latest Available Data (year)	Most Recent Data (year)	National Target (2030)
Proportion of employed population aged 15 years old and over living below the international poverty line of US$1.90 per day	-	16.7 (CBMS 2023)	5.4
Proportion of families living below the national poverty line of P13,873.00 (PSA 2023)	48.84% (CBMS 2017)	35.5% (CBMS 2023)	9.0

The city's poverty indicators and sub-indicators generally capture key dimensions of deprivation, though data availability varies across reference years. For instance, some indicators lack baseline data for the recommended year 2015, particularly on the proportion of families living below the international poverty line of US$1.90 per day. The 2023 computation used an exchange rate of US$1 = PhP 55.63, while local-level data were drawn from multiple sources, including the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) and the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). These datasets, however, used differing poverty thresholds and methodologies, affecting comparability.

In Figure 15, the CBMS 2017 recorded a higher poverty threshold at ₱24,000 monthly family income, as its system used the National Capital Region benchmark—well above the national average. In contrast, the PSA 2023 used a national poverty threshold of ₱13,873 monthly income for a family of five. Despite these discrepancies, the city's recent data indicate a poverty incidence rate of 16.7%, which remains significantly above the national target of 5.4%. This underscores the need for harmonized local data systems and targeted livelihood interventions to close the gap and ensure inclusive progress toward SDG 1: No Poverty.

The city has demonstrated measurable progress in poverty reduction, particularly in indicators aligned with the national poverty threshold, where the poverty incidence among families declined by 13 percentage points between 2017 and 2023. This positive trend reflects the combined effects of national and local poverty alleviation efforts, supported by sustained social protection programs. Among these, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) continues to serve as a cornerstone intervention in breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty. In 2023 alone, a total of ₱120.6 million in cash grants was distributed to 8,354 household beneficiaries across the city. Complementary programs, such as the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS), provided ₱6.322 million in aid to 1,821 individuals, further reinforcing social safety nets at the community level (see *Figures 16 and 17*).

Figure 16. AICS Poverty-Alleviation Program

Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS)				
Type of Assistance	Number of Clients Served	Financial Accomplishment		
		CSWDO Fund	ISDAP Fund	GRAND TOTAL
Medical	556	128,500.00	1,861,312.30	1,989,812.30
Burial	415	337,000.00	1,456,500.00	1,793,500.00
Transportation	8	14,500.00	7,600.00	22,100.00
Financial	6	-	8,700.00	8,700.00
TOTAL	985	480,000.00	3,334,112.30	3,814,112.30
Additional DSWD-Funded (senatorial funds) AICS benefitting 836 individuals amounting to P2.508 million				

Figure 17. 4Ps Poverty-Alleviation Program

YEAR	Number of Active Beneficiaries	Newly-Registered	Graduated/ Exited	CASH Grants Disbursed (in million PhP)
2019	7,411	345	0	119.230
2020	7,585	0	0	140.035
2021	7,737	392	11	155.183
2022	7,754	421	256	113.962
2023	8,354	1,897	277	120.648

The city's employment landscape remains heavily concentrated in the services sector, with business activity serving as a key driver of job creation and income generation. While there was an observed decline in total employment from business enterprises over the past three years, new jobs increased by 35% in the last two years, signaling economic recovery and renewed investor confidence. Consultations with the local chamber of commerce attribute the temporary contraction in employment primarily to the lingering impacts of Super Typhoon Odette (Rai) in December 2021, which disrupted local enterprises and infrastructure. Nonetheless, the emergence of new investments and business reopenings has spurred optimism for a stronger labor market rebound in the coming years.

In the island barangays, however, unemployment remains a significant challenge. In Cluster 1 (*Figure 18 and Figure 19*), Barangay Alang-alang in Hikdop Island recorded an unemployment rate of 46%, followed by Talisay with 35%, while Sidlakan—also in Hikdop—reported the lowest at only 1.39%. These figures underscore the uneven economic opportunities between mainland and island communities.

Continued coordination between national and local programs, coupled with sustained support for livelihood diversification and enterprise recovery, will be critical in advancing inclusive growth and ensuring that all sectors benefit from the city's post-disaster and post-pandemic recovery trajectory.

Figure 18. Unemployed Population 15 Years Old and Over (Island Cluster 1)
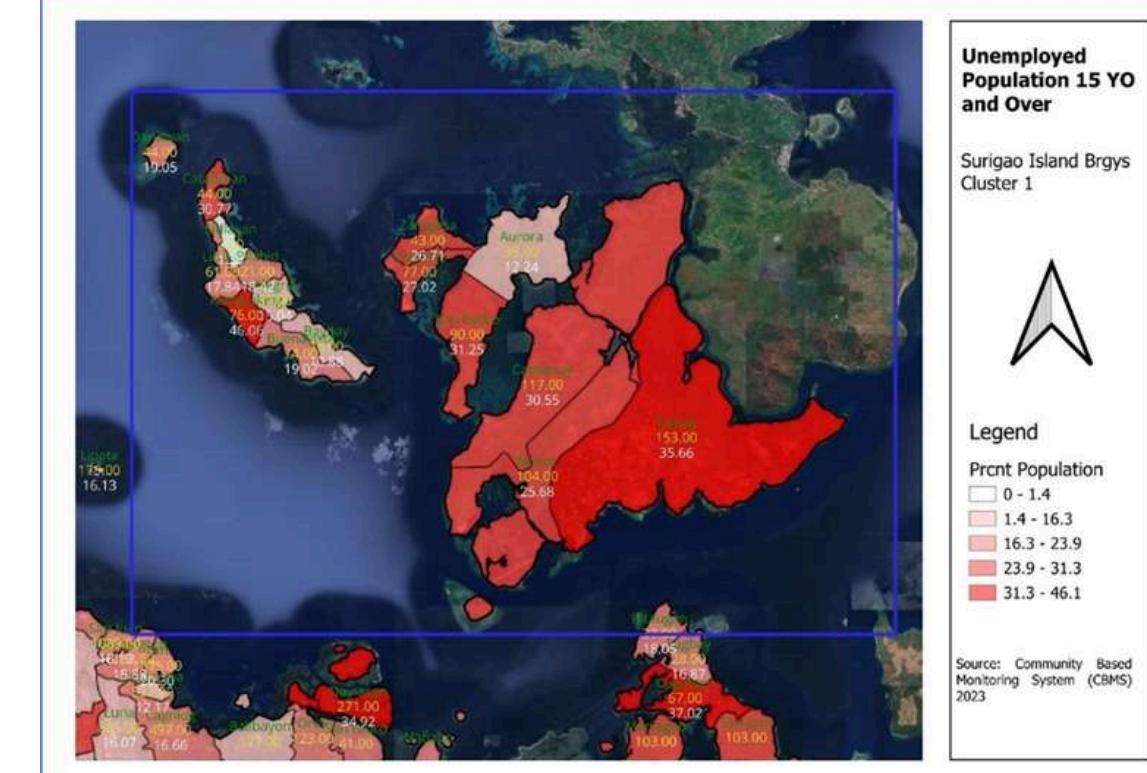

*Figure 19. Comparative Number of Jobs from Business Activities*
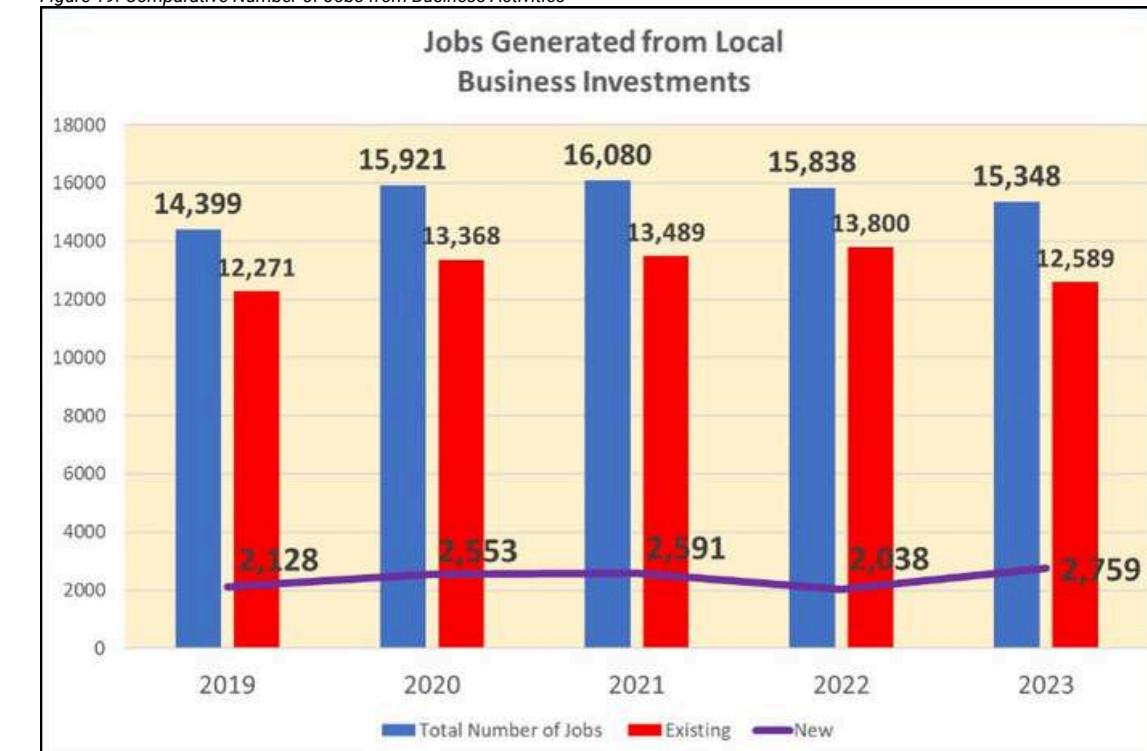
Figure 20. Unemployed Population 15 Years Old and Over (Island Cluster 2)
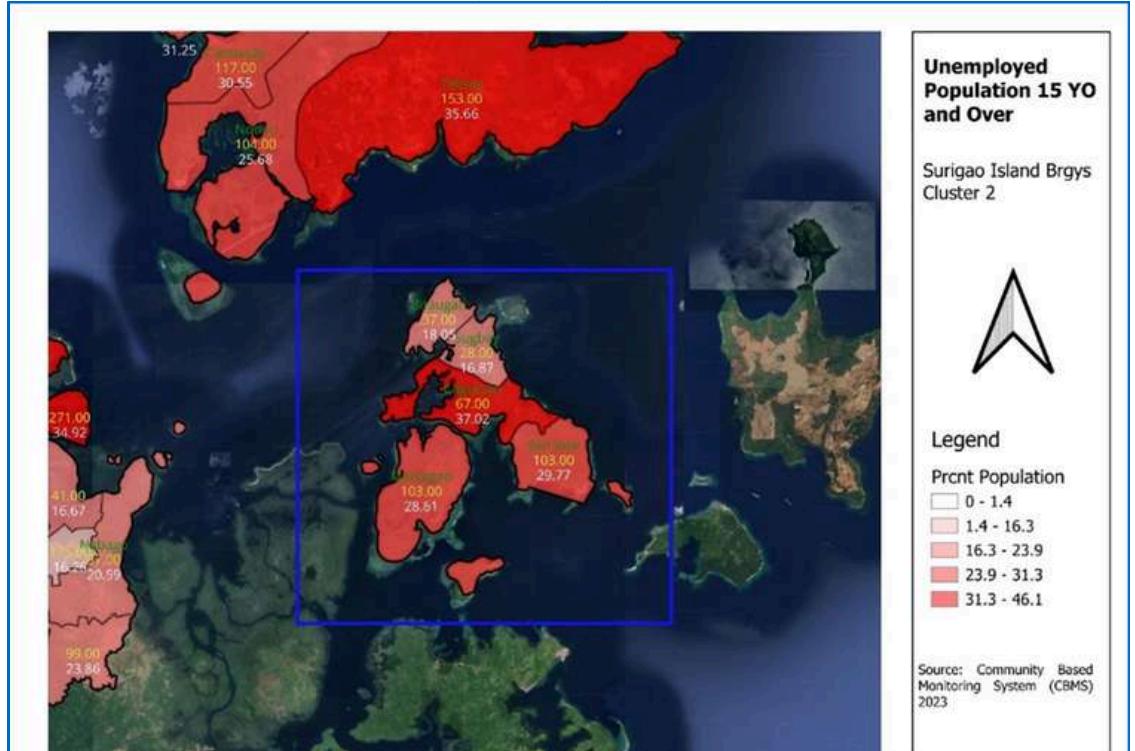
In Island Cluster 2 (*Figure 20*), Barangay Manjagao recorded the highest unemployment rate in the entire city at 37% during the 2023 CBMS survey, while Sugbay registered the lowest at 16.9%.

In the mainland barangays, particularly Cluster 1 (*Figure 21*) located west of the urban core, the highest unemployment was observed in Togbongon (30.1%),whereas Danao and San Roque recorded relatively low unemployment rates of 13.8%.

Figure 21. Unemployed Population 15 Years Old and Over (Mainland Cluster 1)
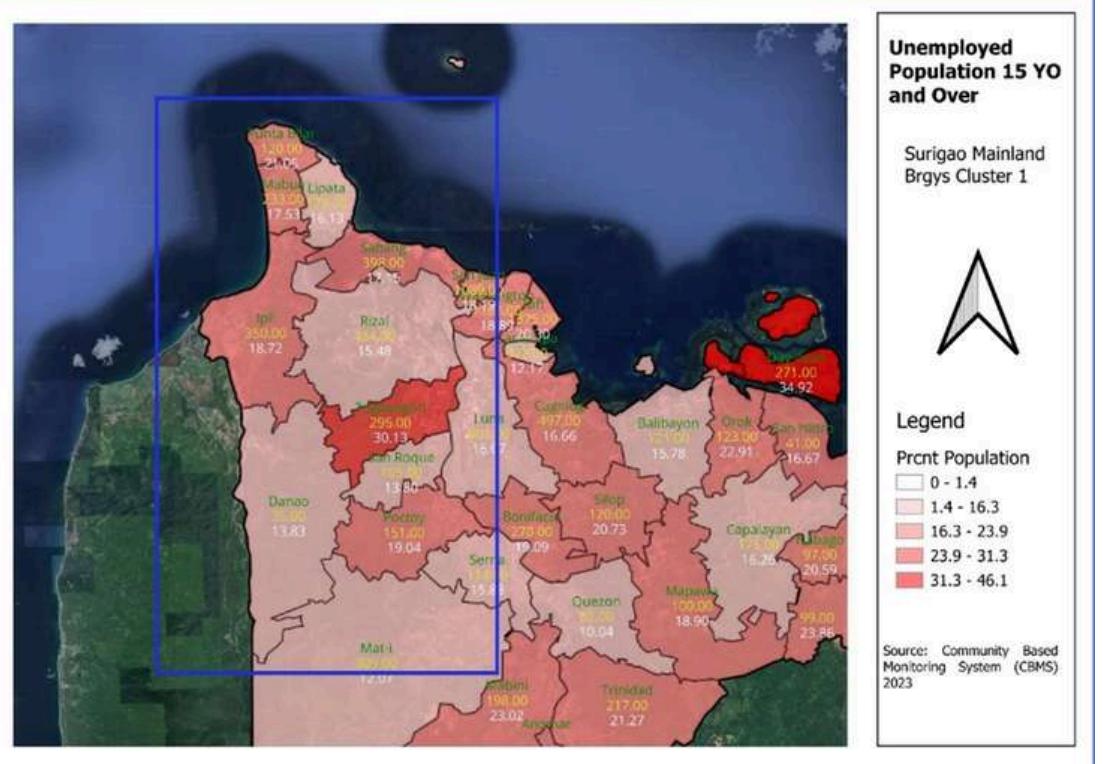
Within the central urban area (*Figure 22*), unemployment remains modest, averaging 17.1% across five (5) urban barangays, with Taft posting the highest at 20.3% and Canlanipa the lowest at 12.2%.

These figures highlight the spatial disparity in employment opportunities between island and mainland communities, underscoring the need for localized employment interventions and livelihood diversification programs.

Figure 22. Unemployed Population 15 Years Old and Over (Mainland Cluster 2)
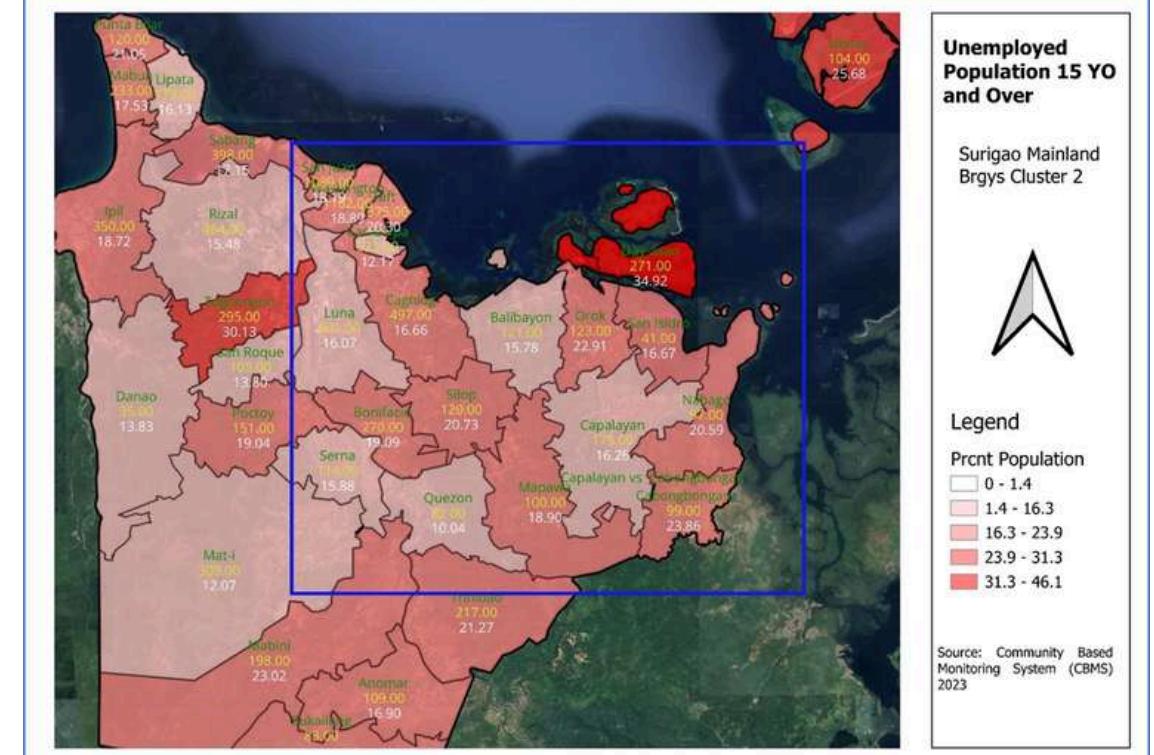
Despite overall progress in poverty and employment indicators, six (6) indicators showed regression between the baseline and 2023 data. The most notable decline is in women's access to modern family planning methods, which dropped by 19 percentage points (from 55% to 36%), alongside a 17-point reduction in contraceptive use. Slight decreases were also recorded in the proportion of families with access to secure tenure (−0.26 point) and in families with owned or owner-possessed housing units (−3.27 points).

Meanwhile, education indicators reflected similar challenges—specifically, a decline in net enrolment rates for kindergarten and elementary levels. The Department of Education noted that the baseline exceeding 100% in previous years resulted from midyear transfers that temporarily inflated enrolment figures beyond the official school-age population. These regressive trends emphasize the need for strengthened social programs and targeted capacity-building to ensure that the city's human development gains are both inclusive and sustainable across all localities.

As illustrated in *Figure 23*, the proportion of the population with access to electricity stands out as a key indicator that has already met the national target, marking a major achievement for the City of Surigao. This milestone is particularly significant given that 21 of the city's 54 barangays are located on islands, where access to utilities has historically been a challenge. As shown in *Figure 24*, the full electrification of all 54 barangays was realized only in 2024,

when the last island village of Danawan was connected to the power grid through a submarine cable. Data from the local electric cooperative further confirms this progress, indicating a steady increase in the number of subscriber connections from 2021 to 2023, signaling not only improved service coverage but also enhanced economic activity and quality of life among residents.

Figure 23. Selected SDG1 indicators showing regression for the comparative period

Indicator	Latest Available Data (year)	Most Recent Data (year)	National Target (2030)
Proportion of currently married women of reproductive age (15-49 years old) who have their need for family planning satisfied (provided) with modern methods	55% (2015) CPR = 65%	36% (2023) CPR = 35%	100%
Proportion of all women aged 15-49 years who have ever used any contraceptive methods	53% (2015)	35.99% (2023)	100%
Proportion of families with access to secure tenure	86.2% (CBMS 2017)	85.94% (CBMS 2023)	100%
Net Enrolment Rate • Kindergarten • Elementary	(2015) 91.5% 106.1%	(2023) 89.04% 91.84%	100% 100%
Proportion of families with owned or owner-like possession of housing units	89.21% (CBMS 2017)	85.94% (CBMS 2023)	100%

*Figure 24.Comparative Number of Electrical Connections*
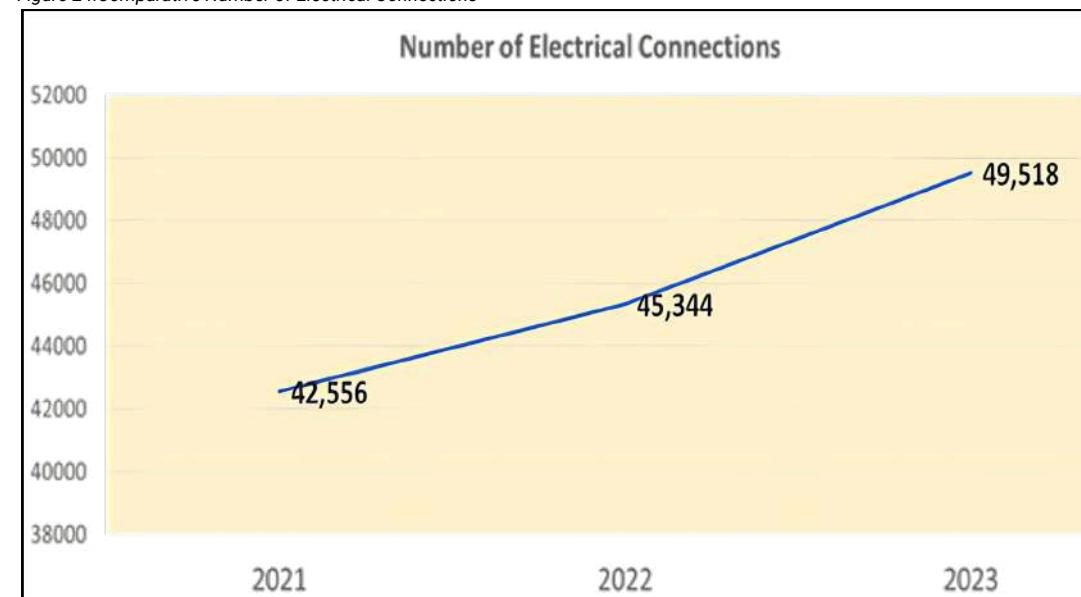
As shown in *Figure 25*, notable gains were observed in the proportion of families with access to safe drinking water, sanitation services, and handwashing facilities with soap and water. Likewise, maternal and child health indicators—such as the proportion of women receiving antenatal care from skilled health personnel, births attended by skilled professionals,

and postnatal check-ups within two days after delivery—have reached near-universal coverage at almost 100%. Furthermore, local government data indicate a steady increase in spending on social services and development initiatives, from 17.7% in 2015 (₱101.4 million of ₱573.02 million) to 23.06% in 2023 (₱287.6 million of ₱1.24 billion). *See Figure 26.*

Figure 25. Indicators showing progress and with high potential to achieve national targets in 2030

Indicator	Latest Available Data (year)	Most Recent Data (year)	National Target (2030)
Proportion of families with access to basic drinking water services	94.7% (2017 CBMS)	97.47% (CBMS 2023)	100%
Proportion of families with access to basic sanitation services	76% (LGU 2015)	91.03% (CBMS 2023)	100%
Proportion of families with access to handwashing facility with soap and water	76% (LGU 2015)	90.7% (CBMS 2023)	100%
Proportion of women ages 15-49 years who received antenatal care from skilled health personnel for the most recent birth	59%	98.93%	100%
Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	95%	98.93%	100%
Proportion of women ages 15-49 years with postnatal check-up in first two days after birth	65%	91.07%	100%

Figure 26. Comparative proportion of total local government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)
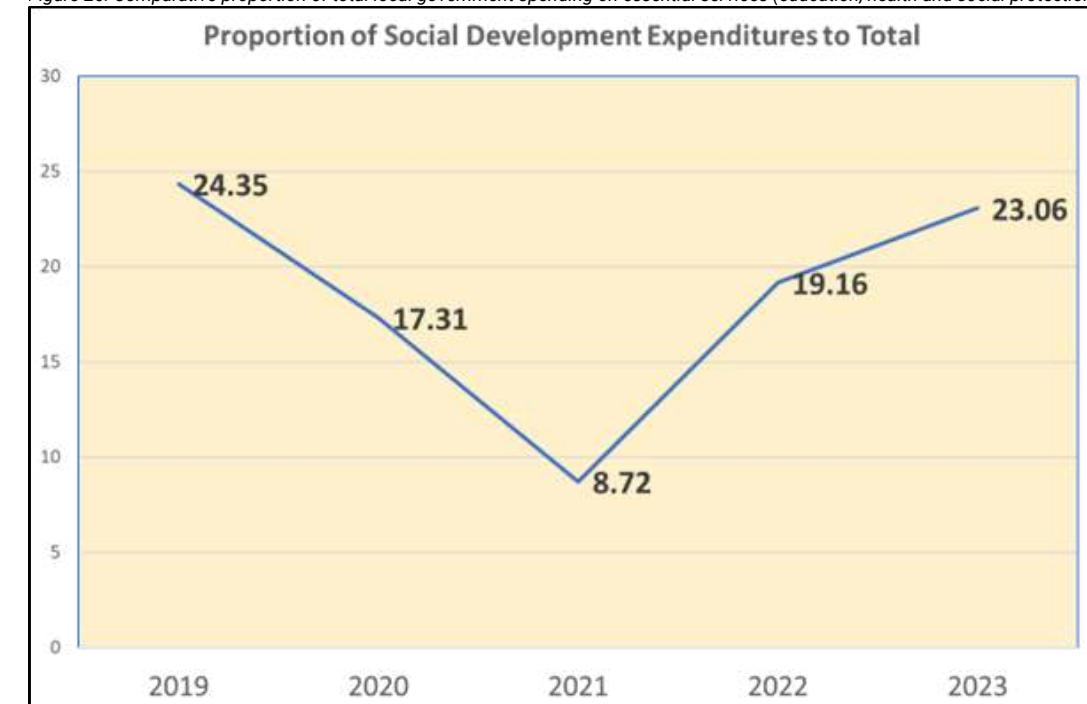
SDG 2 ZERO HUNGER : *End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.*

The City of Surigao has localized one target from the official SDG Watch indicators, focusing primarily on nutrition outcomes such as stunting, wasting, and obesity among children *Figure 27*. The data reveal a 2.6-point regression in stunting, though the city's incidence remains below the national target, indicating relatively good nutritional status among children. The prevalence of wasting improved significantly,

surpassing national performance levels, while obesity rates have shown a steady decline since 2022. However, there is currently no available national benchmark for overweight prevalence among children. These outcomes suggest that local nutrition interventions and monitoring efforts are yielding tangible results, supported by the city's continuing partnership with national agencies.

Figure 27. Indicators showing cases of stunting, wasting and obesity among children

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Prevalence of stunting (height for age 2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age	6.9	9.5	24.9
Prevalence of malnutrition for children under 5 years <-2 SD from the median of the WHO CGS (wasting)	9.29	3.3	3.7
Prevalence of malnutrition for children under 5 years >+2 SD from the median of the WHO CGS (overweight)	4.3 (2022)	3.65	

Figure 28. Local and National Government spending on various agricultural programs

Fund Source/Agency Program	Amount
Local Government –Various Programs	25,724,555.28
DA – Rice/Palay Program	14,213,320.00
DA – Farm Mechanization	3,000,240.00
DA/ATI – High Value Crops Development Program	806,450.00
DA – Organic Farming	8,480.00
NIA – Irrigation Development Program	54,050,000.00
PCA – Coconut Development Program	1,446,505.00
BFAR – Fisheries Development Program	7,219,717.00
PCIC – Crop Insurance Program	12,577,120.00
TOTAL	119,049,387.28

P119.05 million CY2023

LGU & National Government Collaboration

Food production and agricultural development continue to be major priorities for the city. In 2023, the local government, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, allocated ₱119.049 million for agricultural programs—the highest investment in five years, representing an average annual growth rate of 44.5% from 2019 to 2023 (*Figures 28–29*).

Figure 29. Comparative Value of Agricultural Projects and Services
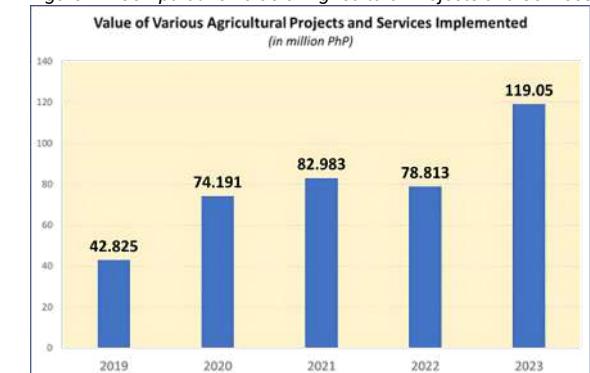
Figure 30. Comparative Livestock Production from Natural Breeding and Artificial Insemination

NATURAL BREEDING	Year			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Carabao	194	311	349	332
Cow	36	183	146	120
Sow/Gilt	402	462	125	214
Doe	87	90	-	-
Total	719	1,046	620	666

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION	Year			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Caracalf	23	25	43	20
Calf	5	6	18	5
Piglet	5,678	2,702	2,240	4,192
Total	5,706	2,733	2,301	4,217
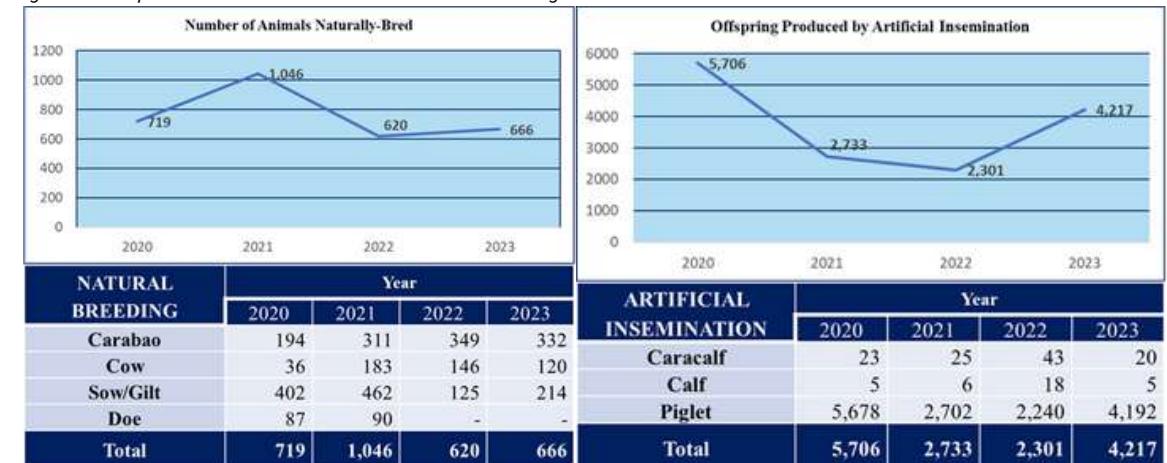
Despite these gains, food insecurity persists, as reflected in the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) survey data. Between 2017 and 2023, the proportion of households experiencing food shortages within the previous 12 months rose from 3.62% to 12.89% (*Figure 30*). This increase signals the continuing vulnerability of certain sectors to income shocks and food supply disruptions, particularly in island and rural barangays.

The CBMS data serve as a vital input for refining food security strategies, enabling the local government to target interventions more effectively. Regular CBMS implementation every three years, as mandated by law, remains critical to generating updated local statistics that can guide policy decisions and strengthen the city's progress toward achieving zero hunger by 2030.

Figure 31. Incidence of hunger among households

	2017	2023
Proportion of households who experience food shortage in the last 12 months	**3.62%** 1,285 of 35,510 households	**12.89%** 5,099 of 39,558 households

SDG 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.*

The City of Surigao reviewed eight (8) targets and 21 indicators, of which seven (7) showed regression. These include vital health indicators such as under-five, neonatal, and infant mortality rates, along with a decrease in the proportion of fully immunized children and the contraceptive prevalence rate between 2022 and 2023 *Figure 32 and Figure 33*.

Figure 32. Selected SDG3 indicators showing regression for the comparative period

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Under-five mortality rate	10.89	11.87	20.7
Neonatal mortality rate	2.54	4.4	6.5
Infant Mortality Rate	7.26	9.67	9.8
Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population	168	629	0
Mortality rate attributed to chronic respiratory disease	38[a] female = 23 male = 15	229[a] female = 86 male = 143	0.2 0.2 0.2
Contraceptive Prevalence Rate	36.72 (2022)	35.99	100
Proportion of Fully Immunized Children	79%	73.33% 2,491[b]	

[a]*number of cases, deaths recorded for the disease*
[b]*number of persons administered with the vaccine*

The number of tuberculosis (TB) cases and deaths attributed to chronic respiratory diseases also increased during the same period. Local health authorities attribute these patterns partly to referrals from neighboring municipalities, where patients often lack proper prenatal or preventive care before accessing the city's hospital facilities.

Despite these increases, the overall mortality rates remain lower than national averages, suggesting that the city's healthcare delivery system remains generally effective.

Figure 33.Comparative Data on Selected Health Indicators

Health Indices

VITAL HEALTH INDICATORS	INDEX				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Under Five Mortality Rate	9.24	15.12	3.61	8.34	11.87
Neo-Natal Mortality Rate	6.75	6.20	6.20	3.95	4.40
Infant Mortality Rate	6.75	10.47	10.47	5.71	9.67

The increase in tuberculosis incidence (*Figure 34*) reflects not only a higher caseload but also improved detection, monitoring, and treatment coverage, following the expansion of TB-DOTS centers (Directly Observed Treatment, Short-Course) in four city health districts and select private hospitals. The city's TB treatment success rate reached 90% in 2023, surpassing national benchmarks for effective disease management.

Meanwhile, the observed decline in full immunization coverage is largely linked to vaccine misinformation arising from the "Dengvaxia scare" and the recent COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, particularly in rural barangays. Nonetheless, intensified health education campaigns are underway to restore community confidence in immunization programs.

Figure 34. Pertinent data on TB Treatment and Control Program, 2023

Tuberculosis Treatment and Control Program (2023)

District	No. of Diagnosed TB cases (all forms)	No. Successfully treated	Died	Failed	Lost to Follow-up	Not Evaluated	SUCCESS Rate
Washington	107	91	2	0	12	2	85%
Taft	125	108	3	1	12	1	86%
San Juan	85	83	2	0	0	0	98%
Luna	74	72	1	1	0	0	97%
CRH	332	317	3	2	10	0	95%
St. Paul	88	75	0	0	9	4	85%
SDH	50	25	2	0	22	1	50%
Surigao City	861	771	13	4	65	8	90%

Figure 35. Comparative Data on Local Family Planning Program, 2022-2023

Family Planning Program

District	2022 No. of Users	2023 No. of Users
San Juan	1,926	1,891
Taft	4,187	3,638
Washington	4,673	3,917
Luna	2,409	2,873
CHO Total	13,195	12,319
NGO	1,892	680
CRH	319	3,446
Grand Total	15,406	16,445

6.32% increase in the number of users

On reproductive health, the contraceptive prevalence rate declined slightly from the 2015 baseline to 2023 (*Figure 35* and *Figure 36*), yet the number of active contraceptive users has increased over the last two years due to renewed advocacy and service integration at the barangay level. This reflects the city's ongoing efforts to strengthen access to comprehensive and inclusive health services, especially for women and vulnerable populations.

Overall, while certain health indicators show short-term regressions, these trends provide critical insights that inform policy adjustments, capacity-building for health workers, and the need for sustained investment in community-based preventive health systems—key to advancing Surigao City's progress toward achieving SDG 3 by 2030.

Figure 36. Selected SDG3 indicators showing progress for the comparative period

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	2,635[a] 95.61%	2,220[a] 98.79%	100%
Proportion of births delivered in a health facility	2,610[a] 94.70%	2,220[a] 98.79%	100%
Number of new HIV infections (newly diagnosed cases/year)	180	27 (tested reactive)	0
Malaria incidence per 1,000 population	0	0	0
Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease	219[b] female = 96 male = 123	18[b] female = 7 male = 11	1.8 1.8 1.8
Mortality rate attributed to cancer	74[b] female = 34 male = 40	21[b] female = 9 male = 12	0.7 0.7 0.7
Mortality rate attributed to diabetes	24[b] female = 15 male = 9	5[b] female = 1 male = 4	
Proportion of the target population with access to 3 doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis	4,147[c]	2,778[c] 89.21%	

[a]number of births recorded
[b]number of deaths recorded for the disease
[c]number of persons vaccinated


Photo credit : PIO Surigao

SDG 4 QUALITY EDUCATION : *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*

Education remains one of the most centralized functions of the Philippine government, with the Department of Education (DepEd) as the lead implementing agency. However, the Local School Board (LSB) plays a vital complementary role at the city level, ensuring that local priorities are addressed through the Special Education Fund (SEF)—a mandated 1% share from real property taxes. This fund provides regular and predictable financing support to education programs, bridging the resource gap between national and local priorities. The SEF covers personnel services such as honoraria for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) teachers and non-teaching staff, as well as operational and developmental initiatives that promote inclusive and quality learning.

As shown in *Figure 37*, Surigao City's SEF collections have exhibited a 10.98% annual growth rate over the past five years, reflecting improved fiscal management and revenue efficiency. A notable increase in 2021–2022 resulted from the settlement of tax delinquencies, including payments from a previously non-operational cement factory expected to resume operations by 2025. The SEF supports not only basic operational requirements—such as utilities, supplies, and minor infrastructure repairs—but also the Alternative Learning System (ALS), educational research, vegetable gardening programs in schools, and student development activities including sports, physical education, and scouting.

Figure 37. SEF Budget for the Local School Board
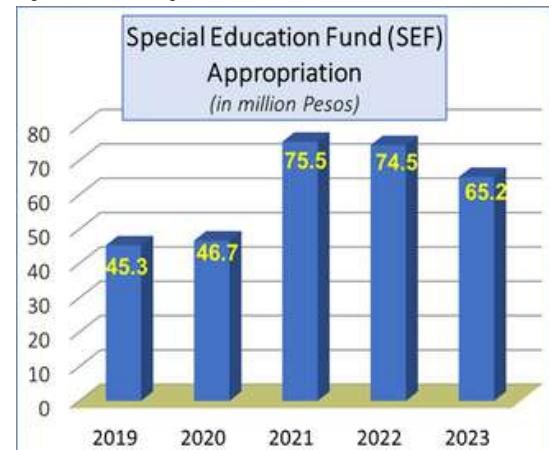
Equally significant is the SEF's contribution to capital outlay investments, particularly the construction and repair of school buildings, and the provision of ICT equipment, furniture, and learning facilities. These investments have strengthened the local education system's resilience and inclusivity, helping ensure that at least half of the education-related SDG indicators under review have met or exceeded national targets. The synergy between national and local funding streams, combined with Surigao City's proactive educational governance, positions the city to sustain progress toward achieving equitable, accessible, and high-quality education for all learners—a cornerstone of SDG 4.

A total of seven (7) targets and twelve (12) indicators comprises the local review for SDG 4 – Quality Education.

The assessment revealed data gaps and inconsistencies in the information provided by the Department of Education (DepEd), which affected the completeness of the local monitoring process. For instance, the indicator on reading and mathematics proficiency included data only for reading proficiency at the elementary level, without corresponding data for mathematics or baseline figures for comparative analysis. These limitations underscore the need for enhanced data management, standardization, and regular reporting mechanisms to ensure more accurate tracking of education outcomes and alignment with national and global SDG monitoring frameworks. (See *Figures 38 and 39.*)

The completion and cohort survival rates for both elementary and junior high school levels demonstrate a positive trajectory, with elementary education showing a strong likelihood of achieving the national target of 100%. Indicators on the Gender Parity Index (GPI) likewise reflect encouraging outcomes, suggesting that the city continues to promote inclusive access to quality education across genders (see *Figure 40*). *Figure 41* also shows sustained progress, particularly in maintaining parity and retention, although a slight reduction was noted in the ratio of primary education enrollment.

Figure 38. SDG4 indicators relating to improvement of physical facilities with some achieving already the 2030 National Targets

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Proportion of public schools with access to electricity	96.85 (2021)	100	100
Proportion of public elementary schools with access to electricity	100	100	100
Proportion of public junior high school with access to electricity	100	100	100
Proportion of public schools with access to the internet for pedagogical purposes	52.31	70.77	100
Proportion of public elementary schools with access to the internet for pedagogical purposes	81.82	90.91	100
Proportion of public junior high school with access to the internet for pedagogical purposes	80.95	72.73	100
Proportion of public schools with access to single-sex basic sanitation facilities		75.38	100
Proportion of public elementary schools with access single-sex basic sanitation facilities		95.45	100
Proportion of public schools with access to basic handwashing facilities		100	100
Proportion of public elementary and junior high schools with access to basic handwashing facilities		100	100

Figure 39. SDG4 Indicator on Reading Proficiency

Indicator	Most Recent Data (2023)
Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics	Reading (both sexes) Grade 2 55.67% Grade 3 55.69%

Figure 40. SDG4 Indicators on Basic Education Completion and Cohort Survival Rates

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Completion Rate Elementary	76.79	96.55	100
• Female	74.41	98.04	100
• Male	79.31	94.84	100
Completion Rate Junior High School	64.6	78.89	100
• Female	69.01	84.95	100
• Male	60.68	73.42	100
Completion Rate Senior High School	88.74	85.06	100
• Female			100
• Male			100
Cohort Survival Rate Elementary	87.53	96.55	100
• Female	89.25	98.04	100
• Male	85.90	94.84	100
Cohort Survival Rate Junior High School	81.62	78.89	100
• Female	86.28	84.95	100
• Male	77.49	73.42	100
Cohort Survival Rate Senior High School		85.06	100
• Female			100
• Male			100

Figure 41. SDG4 Indicators on Gender Parity Index

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Gender Parity index in net enrolment rate			
• Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	0.93	0.92	1.0
• Ratio of girls to boys in junior high school	0.95	0.99	1.0
• Ratio of girls to boys in senior high school		0.94	1.0

In terms of technical-vocational education, *Figure 42* highlights a certification rate of 92.5% in 2023, covering both public and private institutions accredited by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

The City Livelihood Training and Productivity Center, a TESDA-accredited facility, expanded its course offerings by more than 50% in 2023, demonstrating strong local commitment to equipping residents with employable and industry-relevant skills.

Figure 42. Comparative Two-Year Data of the Local Government-Operated Tech-Voc Facility

QUALIFICATIONS	NUMBER OF TRAININGS CONDUCTED		ENROLMENT		NUMBER OF CERTIFIED TRAINEES	
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
BEAUTY CARE NC II	2	3	42	35	18	8
COOKERY NC II	5	5	110	90	87	70
DRESSMAKING NC II	3	4	40	67	37	
DRIVING NC II	6	11	123	141	99	127
ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE NC II	5	6	99	134	75	95
HEO (RIGID ON HIGHWAY DUMPTRUCK NC II)	5	1	115	26	69	23
SHIELDED METAL ARC WELDING NC I	2	3	46	39	34	31
SHIELDED METAL ARC WELDING NC II	-	3		17		16
BASIC COMPUTER EDUCATION	1	3	20	43	NON-TR	
ADVANCE COMPUTER (VISUAL GRAPICS DESIGN) NC III		1		54	NON-TR	
ADVANCE COMPUTER (TECHNICAL DRAFTING)	1	3		23		
BASIC MICRO COMPUTER SERVICING		2	22	33	NON-TR	
CARPENTRY		2		29		
MASONRY		2		15		
PLUMBING		2		20		
TOTAL	**30**	**47**	**670**	**712**	**419**	**370**

The City Scholarship Program remains a flagship social investment, providing consistent annual support to poor but deserving students in tertiary and higher education institutions. In 2023, 639 students benefited from the program, which has been sustained across multiple administrations for nearly two decades, producing numerous successful graduates (see *Figure 43*). However, the basic literacy rate shows a slight regression, particularly among females, with an overall literacy level of 62%, significantly below the national target of 100%.

Figure 43. Comparative Data on City Scholars Enrolled in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Number of City Scholars - HEIs

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
611	520	564	514	639

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Basic Literacy Rate:	54	62	100
• Female	27	24	100
• Male	27	38	100

Based on the 2023 CBMS survey, 1.31% (1,896 out of 144,943) of respondents were reported as illiterate, highlighting the need for strengthened literacy interventions and community-based learning initiatives.

To address this gap, the city continues to promote inclusive literacy programs through partnerships with local schools, barangay councils, and the Alternative Learning System (ALS).

SDG 5 GENDER EQUALITY : *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.*

Gender and Development (GAD) programs have long been an institutionalized component of the City Government's governance and social development agenda. Since the early 2000s, the mainstreaming of GAD initiatives has been ensured through the establishment of the GAD Focal Point System in all city offices. For the Voluntary Local Review (VLR), four (4) targets and twelve (12) indicators under SDG 5: Gender Equality were prioritized. Central to these efforts are the policy frameworks that uphold and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex. Two cornerstone ordinances— the Local Gender and Development Code and the Local Code for Children—anchor these local mechanisms.The first City GAD Code, enacted in 2007, was updated in 2024 to strengthen institutional mandates,while the Children's Welfare Code of 2004 was likewise revised and renamed the Local Code for the Protection of Children in 2024, reinforcing the city's commitment to child protection and gender-responsive governance. The City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) serves as the primary data source for indicators relating to violence against women and children (VAWC). Baseline data from 2015 indicate the number of reported VAWC cases; however, the absence of sex- and age-disaggregated demographic data limits more detailed analysis of trends and proportions (see *Figure 44*). This gap underscores the need for strengthened data management systems and the integration of gender-sensitive statistics to support more comprehensive local monitoring, policy formulation, and targeted interventions toward achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Figure 44. SDG5 Indicators on Ever-Partnered Women and Girls aged 15 Years and Older Subjected to Physical, Sexual or Psychological Violence

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age	343ᵃ	411ᵃ 0.60	10.6
Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months		30ᵃ 0.043	2.4
Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months		2ᵃ 0.0029	1.0
Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months	40ᵃ	35ᵃ 0.051	10.3
Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months	48ᵃ	65ᵃ 0.094	

ᵃnumber of cases reported

As shown in *Figure 45*, data indicate an upward trend in reported cases of gender-based violence in the city. The proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner increased by 19.82% between 2015 and 2023. Similarly, cases of sexual or physical violence rose by 35.41% within the same period. Despite these increases, the overall proportions remain below the 2030 national targets, indicating a relatively low incidence rate in the locality. However, this should not lead to complacency, as the increase in reported cases reflects both a growing awareness among victims and the strengthening of local mechanisms that enable them to report abuse.

According to the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), the rise in reported cases can be partly attributed to the active operation of the GAD Focal Point System and the establishment of Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) desks in all barangays. These mechanisms have improved victims' access to reporting channels and support services. Nonetheless, the local government recognizes the need to sustain values formation, moral recovery programs, and community-based education to address the root causes of domestic and gender-based violence. As shown in F*igure 46*, while the number of gender-based violence cases increased by 8.3% and abuse cases among women rose by 35.65%, reported abuse cases among children decreased by 58.43%, indicating some progress in child protection.

Figure 45. SDG5 Indicators on Gender-Based Violence and Abuse Cases among Women and Children

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)
Number of reported gender-based violence cases	469	507
Number of reported abuse cases for women and children	469	480
Number of reported cases among women	303	411
Number of reported cases among children	166	69

Figure 46. SDG5 Indicators on Proportion of seats held by women in local government

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Proportion of seats held by women in local government (city council; barangay council)	8.33%	8.33% 35.65%	50.0%

In terms of women's participation in governance, the proportion of seats held by women in the local legislative council remains low at 8.3%, significantly below the 50% national target. However, at the barangay level, women's representation has improved,

with 35% of elected officials in 2023 being women. This reflects the positive outcomes of ongoing gender mainstreaming initiatives and the city's continuing commitment to promoting women's leadership and participation in local governance. See *Figure 46*.

Figure 47. Sex Disaggregation of LGU Workforce in the last Five (5) Years
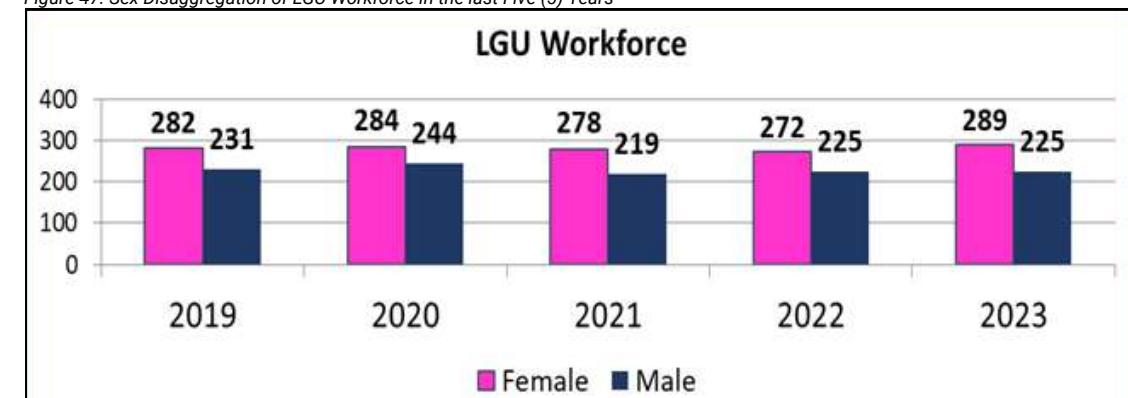
The local government workforce continues to demonstrate strong gender representation, with women comprising most personnel over the past five (5) years. Notably, 60% of managerial and department head positions are held by women, underscoring the city's commitment to gender

equality in leadership and decision-making roles (see *Figure 47*). This reflects the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives within the local bureaucracy and highlights the increasing recognition of women's competence and leadership in public administration.

Figure 48. SDG5 Indicator on Holders of Emancipation Patents

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)
Total Number of holders of Emancipation Patents	1,305	2,283
• Female	409	595
• Male	896	1,688

Another positive development, as shown in *Figure 48*, is the steady increase in the number of women holding emancipation patents, which rose by 45.5% between 2015 and 2023. This trend signifies the growing empowerment of women through land ownership and access to productive resources,

which are critical for economic independence and social inclusion. The local government's support for women's land rights and livelihood programs continues to align with the broader objectives of promoting gender equality and inclusive sustainable development.

Photo credit : PIO Surigao

SDG 6 CLEAN AND WATER SANITATION : *Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.*

The City of Surigao continues to make steady progress toward SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, aiming to ensure universal access to safe and sustainable water and sanitation services. The city's long-term goal is to establish Level III potable water systems in all barangays (villages). Investments in water system development have generally increased over the last five (5) years, with only a slight decline recorded in 2023. See *Figure 49*.

As shown in *Figure 50*, nearly half of the city's 54 barangays—or 23 barangays representing 43%—are now served by Level III systems, primarily within the service coverage of the Surigao Metropolitan Water District (SMWD). From 2015 to 2023, SMWD connections expanded to 27,459 subscribers, reflecting improved access to potable water in both urban and suburban areas.

The Voluntary Local Review (VLR) covers three (3) targets and four (4) indicators under this goal, all showing positive trends. The proportion of families with access to basic drinking water services rose by about three percentage points, reaching 97.47%, which is close to the national target of full coverage. Similarly, the proportion of families with access to basic sanitation services and those with handwashing facilities with soap and water increased by 15 and 14 percentage points, respectively—both now exceeding 90%.

Figure 49. Local Government Water Supply and Irrigation Projects, 2019-2023

WATER SUPPLY & IRRIGATION		
YEAR	TOTAL PROJECT COST (in million PhP)	NO. OF PROJECTS
1999	7.040	5
2020	15.394	10
2021	25.693	9
2022	38.462	12
2023	31.579	15

Figure 50. Number of Subscribers with the Local Water District 2015, 2019, 2023
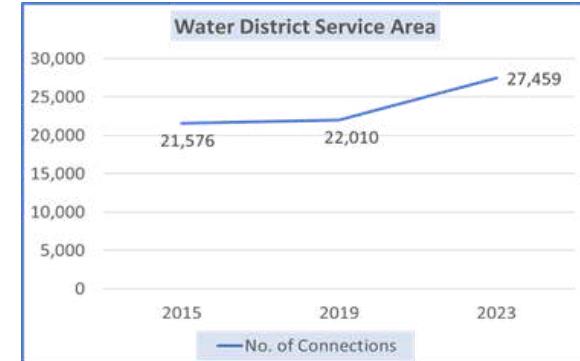
However, a key data gap remains in the monitoring of water quality, as baseline information on the proportion of monitored sources is unavailable. The most recent data on dissolved oxygen and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) indicate low levels compared to national standards, underscoring the need for strengthened monitoring and water quality management systems. See *Figure 51*.

Figure 51. Household Members Without Access to Basic Drinking Water Services, Island Cluster 1
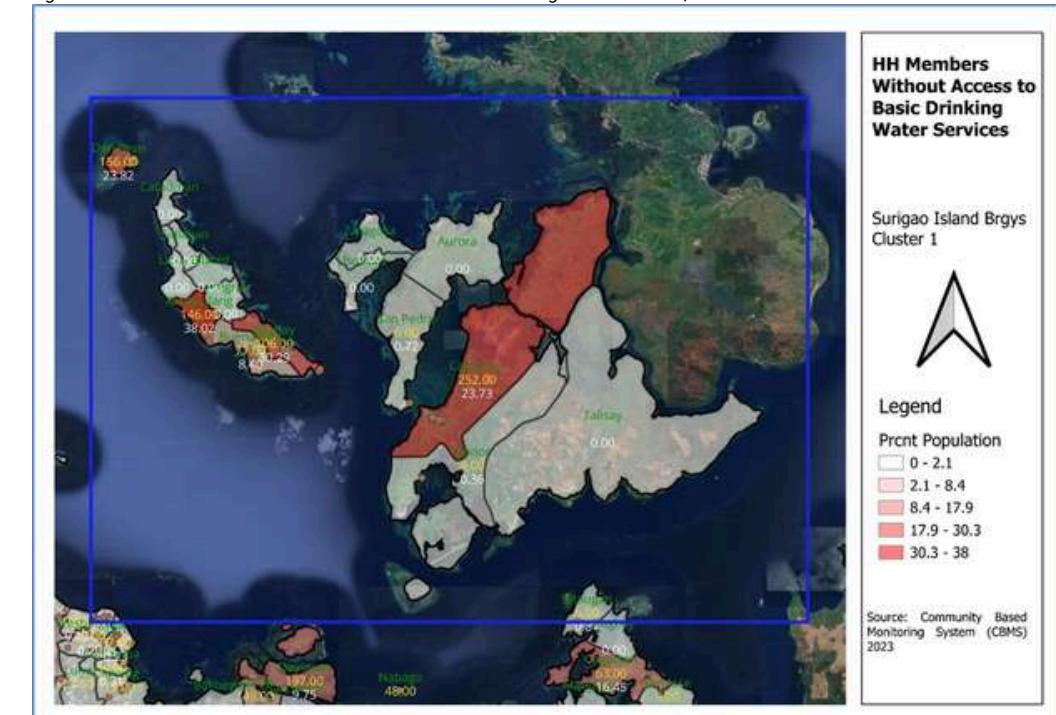
In *Figure 52*, Cluster 2 demonstrates significant progress in expanding access to safe and reliable water sources. Barangay Cagutsan recorded the highest proportion of households without access to basic drinking water in the cluster, though at a relatively low 16%, Moreover, 11 out of the 21 island villages have now achieved 100% access to basic drinking water,while an additional four (4) villages reported less than 1% of households lacking access. This progress reflects the city's continuing commitment to ensuring equitable water service delivery, even in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

Figure 52. Household Members Without Access to Basic Drinking Water Services, Island Cluster 2
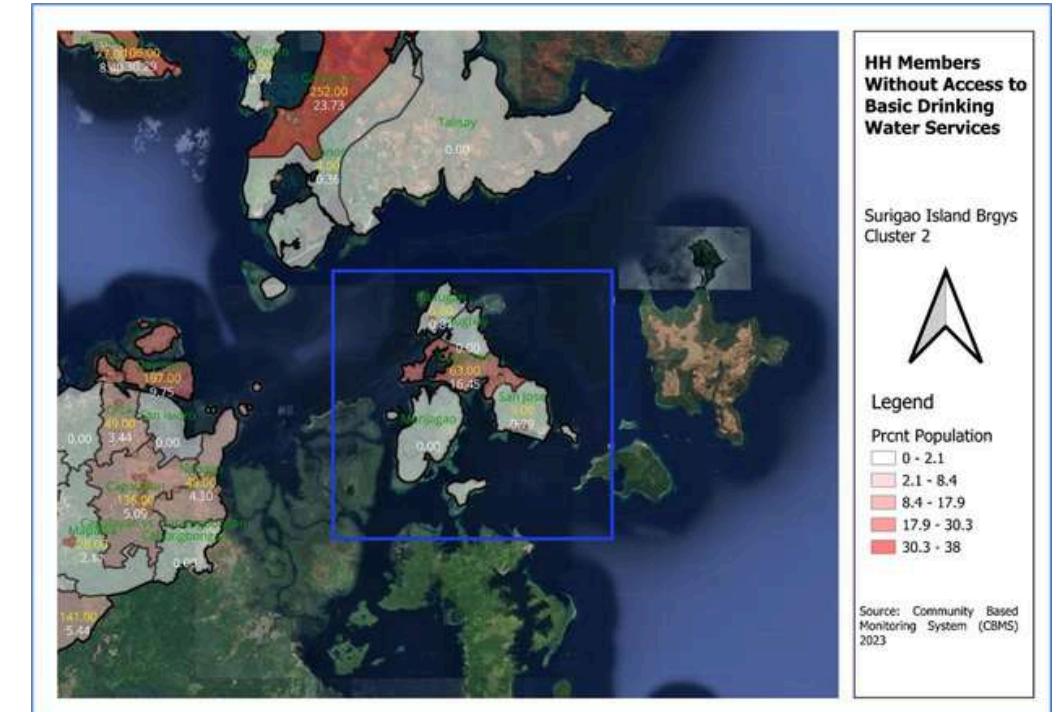
As shown in *Figure 53*, access to basic drinking water in the mainland barangays remains consistently high due to the extensive coverage of the Surigao Metropolitan Water District (SMWD)/PrimeWater and the operation of commercial water refilling and purifying stations, even in some rural areas.

Most mainland villages have achieved near or full access, with the highest proportion of households without basic drinking water recorded in Ipil (17%) under Mainland Cluster 1, followed by Bonifacio (1%).

Figure 54. Household Members Without Access to Basic Drinking Water Services, Mainland Cluster 2

Figure 53. Household Members Without Access to Basic Drinking Water Services, Mainland Cluster 1
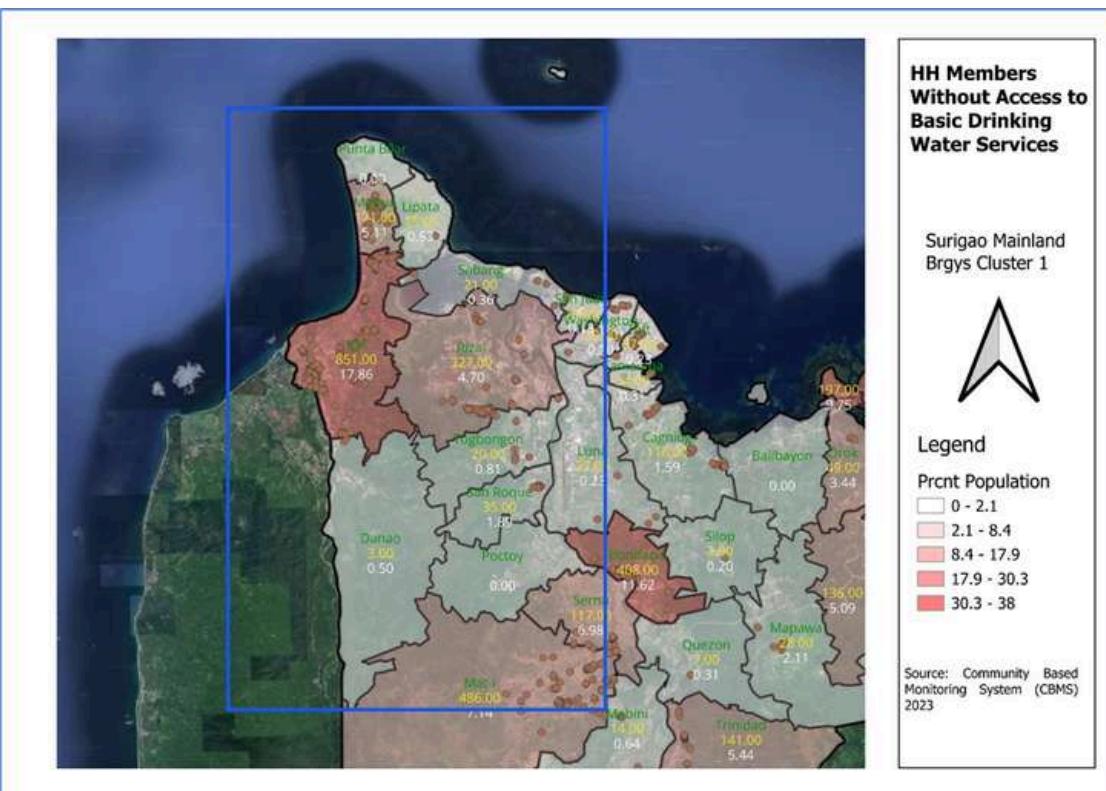
In Cluster 2, especially within the highly urbanized sections, access to basic drinking water services is almost completely universal. Nearly all households are already covered, with fewer than 1% still lacking access to safe and reliable water. Among the remaining households without service, the largest concentration is found in Barangay Canlanipa, accounting for about 0.31%.

These households are predominantly informal settler families who live along the coastal areas, where providing formal water service connections is more challenging due to their residential status and the physical conditions of the area. *Figure 54* illustrates this distribution, highlighting Canlanipa as the area with the most notable gap despite the overall high level of coverage in the cluster.

Meanwhile, in Mainland Cluster 3 (*Figure 55*), the upland barangays demonstrate a positive performance, with the highest rate of households lacking access at only 7% in Mat-i. Out of the 33 mainland villages, five (5) have achieved 100%

household access to basic drinking water, while 14 others report less than 1% of households without access—reflecting sustained progress toward universal water service coverage across the mainland.

*Figure 55. Household Members Without Access to Basic Drinking Water Services, Mainland Cluster 3*
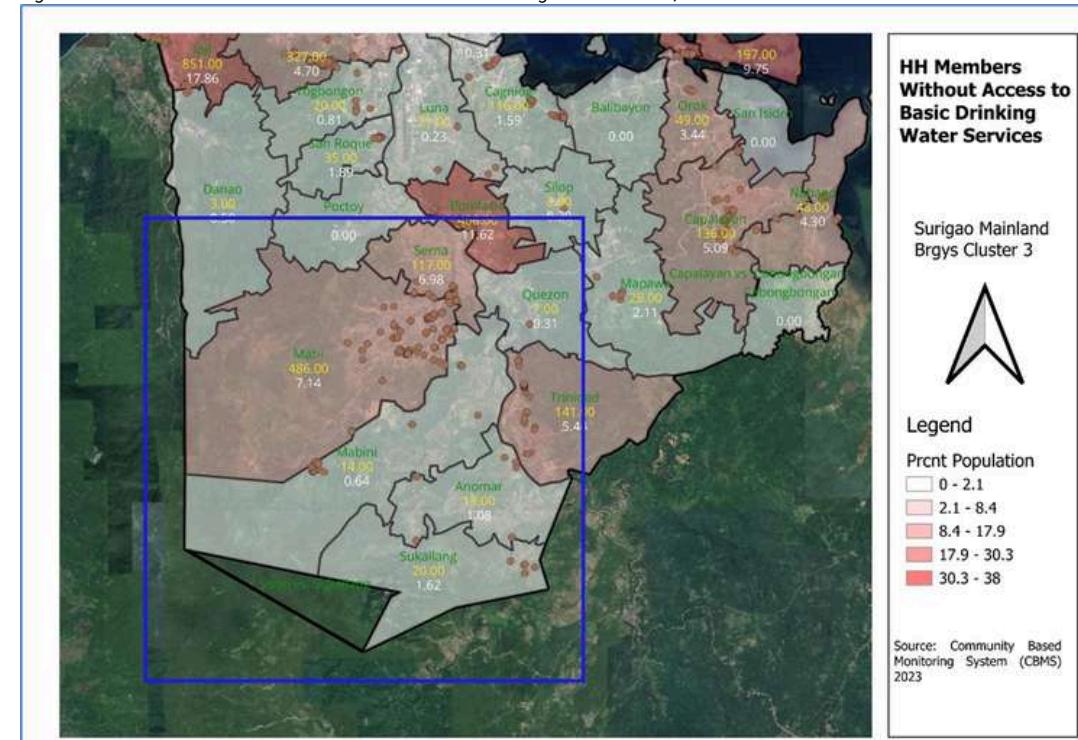
As presented in *Figure 56*, both the proportion of families with access to basic sanitation services and access to handwashing facilities with soap and water show significant improvement, increasing by 15 and 14 percentage points, respectively, and now exceeding 90% coverage.

Community-Based Monitoring System mapping for these indicators uses the percentage of households with unimproved toilet facilities as a reference, in line with the Department of Health Administrative Order No. 2019-0054, which defines unimproved toilets as those that fail to safely contain or hygienically dispose of human waste.

Figure 56. Other selected SDG6 indicators

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Proportion of families with access to basic drinking water services	94.7% (2017 CBMS)	97.47% (CBMS 2023)	100%
Proportion of families with access to basic sanitation services	76% (2015)	91.03% (CBMS 2023)	100%
Proportion of families with access to hand washing facility with soap and water	76% (2015)	90.7% (CBMS 2023)	100%
Proportion of monitored bodies of water with good ambient water quality based on the water quality guidelines of the Clean Water Act • Dissolve Oxygen • Biochemical Oxygen Demand		7.12 0.89	100 100

Figure 57. Household Members with Unimproved Toilet Facility, Island Cluster 1
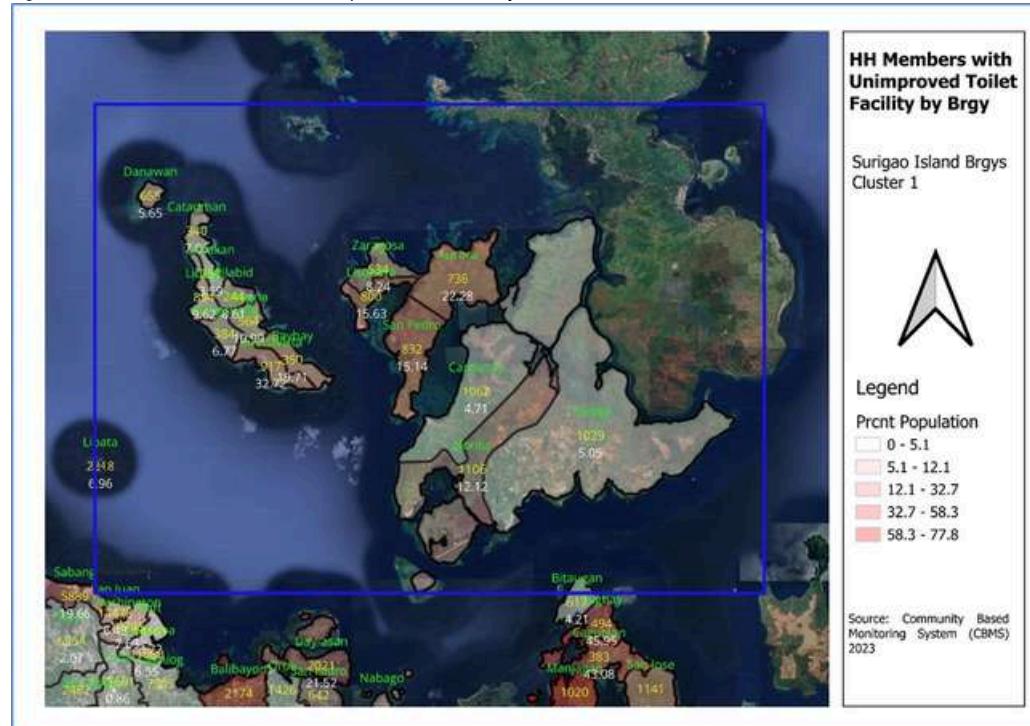
(*Figure 57*) recorded the highest proportion of unimproved toilet facilities in Buenavista (32%), while Libuac registered the lowest at 3%. In Island Cluster 2 (*Figure 58*),Barangay Manjagao reported the highest rate at 77.8%, ompared to only 4% in Barangay Bitaugan.

Meanwhile, in the mainland barangays (*Figure 59*), the highest incidence was observed in Sabang (19%), while San Roque (0.38%) and Togbongon (0.64%) demonstrated almost full coverage of improved toilet facilities, reflecting notable progress in sanitation access across most mainland areas.

Figure 58. Household Members with Unimproved Toilet Facility, Island Cluster 2

In Mainland Cluster 2, the proportion of households without access to sanitary toilet facilities remains uneven across barangays. Barangay Balibayon registered the highest percentage at 58%, while the lowest was recorded in the urban barangay of Luna at 0.86%.

Notably, even within the central urban barangays, there are still households lacking access to sanitary toilet facilities, including San Juan (6.4%), Washington (7.6%), Taft (3.7%), and Canlanipa (6.5%). Luna, now considered an emerging uptown area of the city, shows relatively low incidence at less than one percent.

Figure 59. Household Members with Unimproved Toilet Facility, Mainland Cluster 1

In the third mainland cluster, Barangay Mabini recorded the highest proportion of unimproved toilet facilities at 51%, while the neighboring Barangay Mat-i reported the lowest at 2.35%. The citywide average stands at 8.97%, reflecting continuing disparities in sanitation access between rural and urban areas. Under SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), the only remaining data gap pertains to the baseline data for the proportion of water quality monitoring. Moreover, the most recent readings on dissolved oxygen and biochemical oxygen demand remain significantly below national targets, the need for sustained efforts to improve both water quality management and sanitation infrastructure across all barangays. See *Figure 60 and 61.*

Figure 60. Household Members with Unimproved Toilet Facility, Mainland Cluster 2
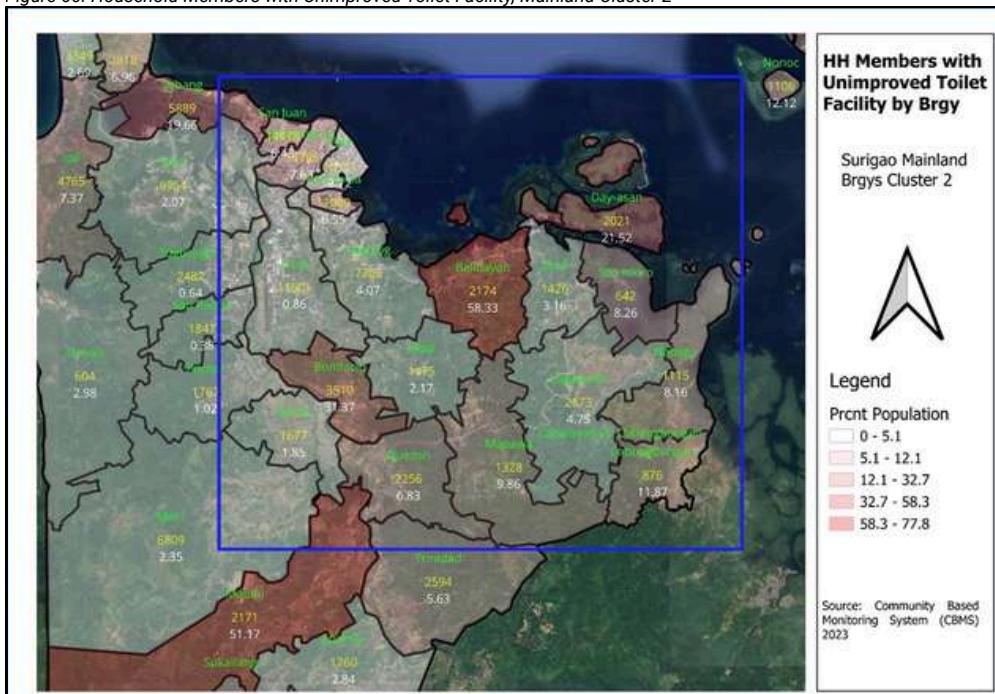
Figure 61. Household Members with Unimproved Toilet Facility, Mainland Cluster 3
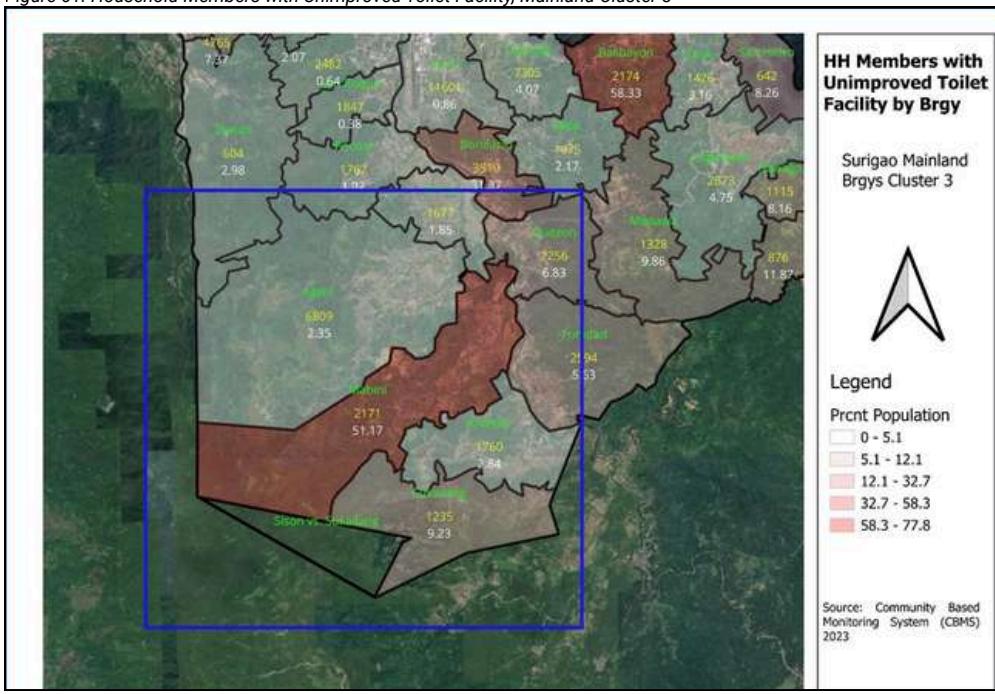
SDG 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES :
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Based on the 2020 Census, Surigao City recorded a total population of 171,107, reflecting a 2.2% annual growth rate—notably higher than the provincial (1.91%), regional (1.45%), and national (1.67%) averages. This steady population increase, as illustrated in *Figure 62,*

has resulted in 64.4% of residents living in urban areas, intensifying pressures on urban planning, land use management, and the efficient delivery of basic services. The rapid urbanization underscores the need for a balanced approach to development that ensures both sustainability and inclusivity across the city's growing communities.

Figure 62. Other selected SDG6 indicators

Year	Population			Growth Rate (%)		Tempo of Urbanization
	Urban	Rural	TOTAL	Urban	Rural	
2015	90,124	64,013	154,137	4.67	-0.47	5.14
2020	110,203	60,904	171,107	4.45	-0.97	5.42

Under SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), two targets and five indicators were reviewed for local relevance. A key indicator—the proportion of urban population living as informal settlers—declined significantly from 32% in 2015 to 20% in 2023, as shown in *Figure 63*. While this reduction marks meaningful progress in addressing urban housing concerns, the figure remains relatively high compared to the national target of less than 1%. This highlights the continuing need for integrated urban renewal, housing development programs, and improved access to secure land tenure for low-income households.

Photo Credit : PIO Surigao- Bajau House plan

Figure 63. SDG11 Indicators on Proportion Urban Population who are Informal Settlers

Indicator	Latest Available Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Proportion of urban population who are informal settlers	32%	20%	<1

The CBMS 2023 survey (*Figure 64*) provides a detailed breakdown of households by housing tenure. Among respondents, 1,780 households reported living in rent-free lots or houses without the owner's consent, representing 5% of the sample, a figure considerably lower than the 20% reported by the PSA. This discrepancy highlights differences in methodology and underscores the importance of regular, localized data collection to complement national statistics for more precise urban planning and policy formulation.Since the passage of the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992, Surigao City has implemented several housing initiatives to support vulnerable populations. Most recently,

in 2022, the city, in partnership with UN-IOM, provided transitory shelters for 120 families displaced by Super Typhoon Odette (Rai) in 2021 (*Figure 65*). These shelters utilized a pre-developed site originally intended for employees' socialized housing, ensuring immediate availability for affected households.The project incorporated a Cash-for-Work scheme, enabling the construction of temporary housing units while simultaneously generating livelihood opportunities and income for the displaced families. This approach demonstrates the city's capacity to leverage existing resources, integrate social protection with disaster response, and provide timely solutions to support urban resilience and the well-being of vulnerable populations.

Figure 64. CBMS Data on the Distribution of Households by Tenure Status, 2023

Distribution of Households by Tenure Status of the Housing Unit

City of Surigao (Capital), Surigao del Norte

Tenure status of housing unit	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Total	Cumulative Percent
Own or owner-like possession of the house and lot	22,477	56.82	22,477	56.82
Own house, rent lot	2,002	5.06	24,479	61.88
Own house, rent-free lot with consent of owner	9,516	24.06	33,995	85.94
Own house, rent-free lot without consent of owner	1,693	4.28	35,688	90.22
Rent house / room, including lot	2,007	5.07	37,695	95.29
Rent-free house and lot with consent of owner	1,775	4.49	39,470	99.78
Rent-free house and lot without consent of owner	87	0.22	39,557	100.00
Total	39,557	100.00		

Source: 2023 Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS), Philippine Statistics Authority

Figure 65. Local Government and UN-IOMs Temporary Shelters for ST Odette (Rai) Displaced Families

Picture Credits: UN-IOM

The City of Surigao, in partnership with UN-Habitat Philippines, implemented its first-ever settlements development project for the Sama Bajau, providing permanent and resilient housing for families affected by Super Typhoon Rai/Odette. This initiative addresses a critical need for a historically marginalized and highly vulnerable population within the city. See *Figure 66*.

The Sama Bajau, migrant Indigenous Peoples (IPs) from the southern Philippines, have settled in Surigao City since the 1970s. Traditionally seafaring and living on boats, they have gradually transitioned into informal coastal settlements, a pattern observed throughout the country. Originating from the Austronesian ethnic groups of Southeast Asia, the Bajau are often referred to as "sea gypsies" and remain among the most underserved IP communities, as government attention has traditionally prioritized upland ancestral domain claims over coastal and maritime populations. Many Bajau households continue to live hand-to-mouth, facing persistent socio-economic vulnerabilities.

To address these challenges, the city partnered with UN-Habitat and national agencies including DENR, DHSUD, and DSWD to implement a holistic and participatory settlement program. The approach emphasizes social preparation, community organizing, capability building, and behavioral transformation, ensuring that the establishment of a sustainable settlement not only provides resilient housing but also strengthens the social and economic resilience of the Sama Bajau community.

Figure 66. Local Government and UN-Habitat's Huy-anan (home) nan Bajau Project

Picture Credits: UN-IOM

The settlement development for the Sama Bajau extends beyond the provision of housing units to delivering culturally sensitive and contextually appropriate homes that respect their coastal traditions and unique needs. Site selection prioritized ecological balance, employing blue-green and circular economy principles as well as nature-based solutions to safeguard coastal and mangrove ecosystems. Integral to the project is a livelihood support program, empowering the Bajau community to serve as custodians and stewards of the mangrove forests, ensuring both environmental sustainability and economic resilience for the community.

Complementing this initiative, the local government has identified idle city-owned property adjacent to existing transitory shelters for future settlement development. Slated to commence in 2025, this site is intended to provide relocation or resettlement opportunities for informal settlers residing in danger zones or affected by government infrastructure projects and court-ordered demolitions, including the redevelopment of existing transitory shelters. Once completed, the project is projected to deliver 1,010 housing lots, significantly contributing to the reduction of housing backlogs and improving the living conditions of informal settler families across the city. See *Figure 67*.

Figure 67. Local Government Planned Resettlement Site for Informal Settlers

The significant reduction in disaster-related fatalities from 1984 to 2021 reflects the enhanced preparedness and effectiveness of local emergency procedures in Surigao City. This positive trend also demonstrates a high level of community awareness and adherence to evacuation protocols, ensuring the safety of residents during disasters. Notably, local government data indicate that there have been no reported cases of missing persons during recent calamities (*Figure 68*).

In 2023, both the national and local governments provided cash assistance to support victims of Super Typhoon Odette, whose homes were either partially or fully damaged. A total of PhP 139.4 million was distributed, benefiting 41,898 households, thereby facilitating recovery and livelihood restoration (*Figure 69*). Complementing these efforts, Surigao City was among the first in the Philippines to integrate Disaster Risk Reduction–Climate Change Adaptation (DRR-CCA) strategies into its 2016 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP).

Since 2011, the city has maintained a fully functional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (DRRMO), responsible for all four phases of the DRRM cycle: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery (*Figure 70*). The DRRMO operates a 24/7 command center, overseeing urban security, surveillance, and rapid deployment of emergency assets.

The city's comprehensive approach has been recognized through the Gawad KALASAG award by the Office of Civil Defense, receiving the highest recognition of "Beyond Compliant" for its outstanding contributions to disaster risk management and humanitarian assistance. See *Figure 71*.

Figure 68. SDG11 Indicators Relating to Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

Indicator	Latest Available Data (year)	Most Recent Data (year)	National Target (2030)
Number of deaths attributed to disasters	1,253 (ST Nitang 1984, International- Ike) 8 (M6.7 Surigao Earthquake 2017)	4 (ST Odette 2021, International - Rai)	0
Number of missing persons attributed to disasters per 100,000	0	0	0
Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters	1,408 (M6.7 Surigao Earthquake 2017)	182,944 (ST Odette 2021, International - Rai)	
The City of Surigao adopts and implements local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction	City DRRM Office established in 2011	Risk sensitive CLUP integrating DRR-CCA adopted in 2016	

Figure 69. Data on Post-ST Odette Housing Assistance

2023 Assistance to Totally Damaged Houses (in million pesos)						
Batches	Non-EHAP Beneficiaries	Amount: P 10,000.00 each	EHAP Beneficiaries	Top Up Amount: P 5,000.00	Total No. of Totally Damaged Houses	Total Amount
1st Batch	3,647	36,470,000.00	6,325	31,625,000.00	9,972	68,095,000.00
2nd Batch	185	1,850,000.00	34	170,000.00	219	2,020,000.00
TOTAL	3,832	38,320,000.00	6,359	31,795,000.00	10,191	70,115,000.00

2023 Assistance to Partially Damaged Houses (in million pesos)		
Batches	No. of Partially Damaged Houses Beneficiaries	Amount P2,500.00 each	Total Amount
First Batch	29,115	2,500.00	72,787,500.00
Second Batch	2,592	2,500.00	6,480,000.00
TOTAL	31,707		79,267,500.00

Figure 70. City DRRMO Command Center

Figure 71. Surigao City Mayor Pablo Yves L. Dumlao II receiving the Gawad KALASAG

SDG 13 CLIMATE ACTION : *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.*

SDG 13: Climate Action covers two targets and four indicators, three shared with SDG 11 on disaster-related deaths, missing persons, and affected populations. The SDG 13-specific indicator focuses on long-term climate strategies, adaptation plans, and local climate action.

The Surigao City DRRM Plan includes contingency measures for floods and earthquakes, addressing its exposure along the eastern seaboard and the Pacific Ring of Fire (*Figure 72*).The updated Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) integrates Climate and Disaster Risk Assessment (CDRA) for risk-sensitive, climate-responsive, ridge-to-reef planning aligned with forest and coastal management plans.

Environmental programs promote ecological balance, resource protection, and pollution mitigation. Tree planting and reforestation drives achieved a 150% increase in seedlings planted (*Figure 73*). Strategic Forest Parks and the Surigao City Nature and Family Park in Sitio Brazil, Barangay Mat-I, highlight the city's commitment to integrated climate action and sustainability.

The Sitio Brazil area holds strategic importance as it overlaps with the protected Surigao Watershed Forest Reserve, which serves as the primary water source for the city's urban and suburban communities. Protecting and sustainably managing this area is therefore critical for ensuring the long-term water security and ecological balance of the city.

The site development plan (*Figures 74 and 75*) outlines several key components focused on conservation and sustainable use. The primary areas are dedicated to conservation and reforestation/tree planting, ensuring ecological restoration and watershed protection. Complementing these conservation efforts, the plan includes minimal but strategic development of eco-tourism facilities, such as camping sites, walking trails, and mountaineering routes, designed to promote environmental awareness and sustainable recreation.

Figure 72. SDG13 Indicator on Integration of Climate Change Measures into Local Planning and Strategies

TARGET: Integrate climate change measures into local policies, strategies and planning		
Indicator	**Latest Available Data (2015)**	**Most Recent Data (2023)**
The city has long-term strategies, adaptation plans and adaptation communications	DRRM Office established in 2011	Presence of City DRRM Plan. Climate and Disaster Risk Assessment (CDRA) integrated into the CLUP

Figure 73. Two-Year Comparative Data on Upland Tree Planting/ Reforestation Activities

	2022	2023
Tree Planting/ Reforestation Activities	432 seedlings of various tree species (Doyok-doyok, Maribojoc, Agoho, Talisay)	1,120 seedlings of various tree species (Agoho, Palawan Cherry, Narra, Magkono, Duyok-duyok, Rambutan, Caimito, Santol, and Lanzones

Figure 74. Barangay Cagniog Forest Park Site Development Plan

Barangay Cagniog Forest Park Site Development Plan

In recognition of the cultural and social dimensions, the development plan also provides for a tribal hall to serve the indigenous communities residing in the upland areas. This facility supports community engagement, capacity-building, and the preservation of traditional knowledge, aligning with the city's holistic and inclusive approach to environmental management and climate-resilient development.

Solid waste management remains a critical component of the City of Surigao's climate action and environmental sustainability agenda, particularly in urban and suburban areas where waste generation is highest.

The city has been recognized for its proactive compliance with the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, including the closure of open dumpsites and the establishment of a sanitary landfill (*Figure 76*). The Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) has acknowledged these efforts, underscoring the city's leadership in environmentally responsible waste management.Despite these achievements, the city continues to face challenges in promoting household-level awareness and engaging other waste generators in proper waste segregation.

Figure 75. Site Development Plan and Ground Breaking Activity of the Surigao City Family and Nature Park

Figure 76. Recognition from DENR-Environmental Management Bureau for Outstanding Solid Waste Management Practices

Figure 78. Data on waste collection and recovery

Figure 77. The Sanitary Landfill Facility of the City of Surigao
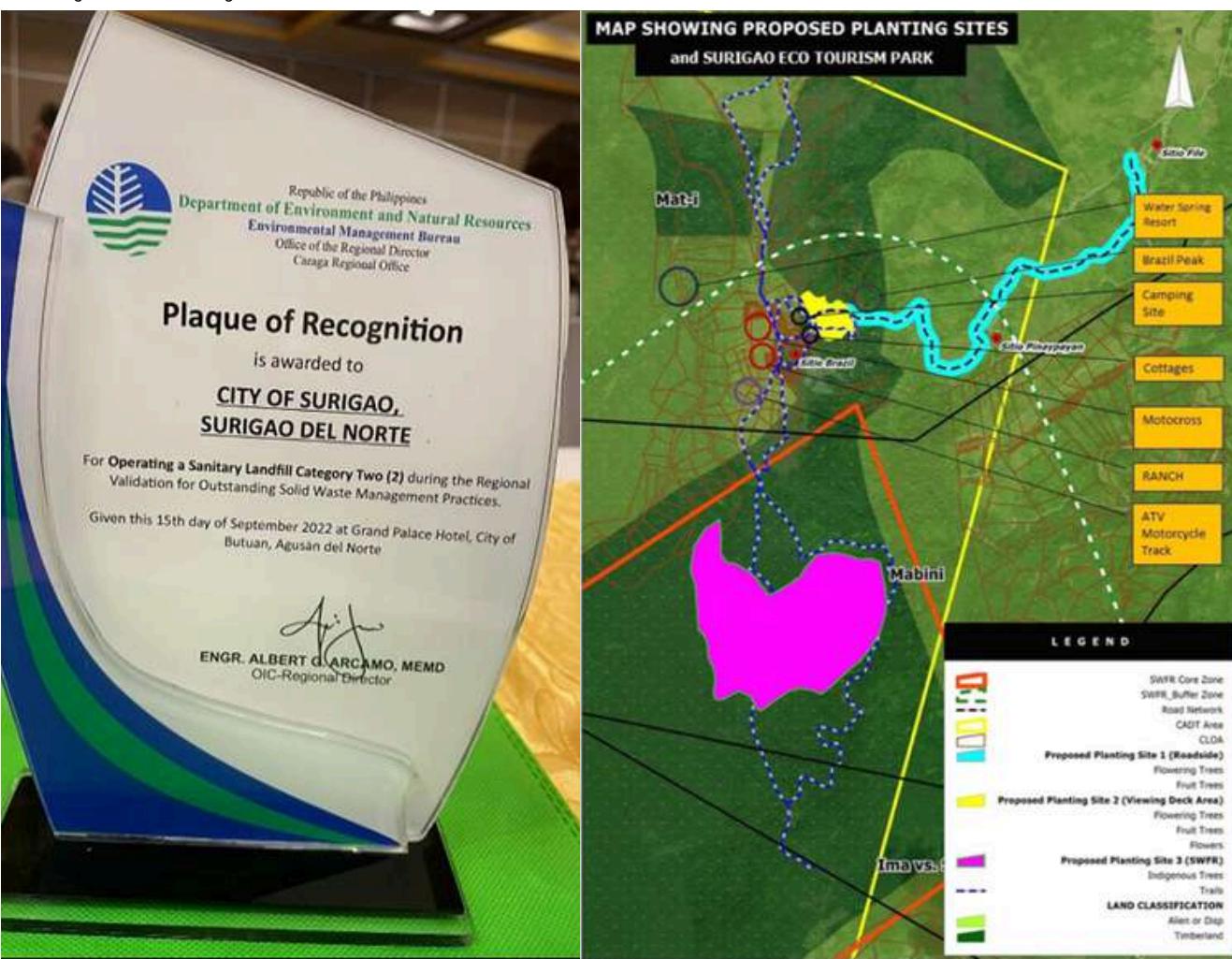
Efforts are underway to transition from the traditional 3Rs approach (reduce, reuse, recycle) to the broader 5Rs framework (refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle), enhancing community participation and promoting sustainable consumption patterns (*Figure 77*). As of 2023, the city's waste recovery rate remains at 13%, emphasizing the need for stronger initiatives to capture recyclable materials and improve efficiency (*Figure 78*). To address this, innovative technologies have been introduced to maximize resource recovery and lessen landfill dependence.

The city's sanitary landfill facility now operates pulverizing machines for glass and plastics, which are repurposed into hollow blocks and concrete pavers. These recycled materials are used in repairing sidewalks and improving urban infrastructure, showcasing an integrated approach linking waste management, urban development, and climate action (*Figure 79*).

Additionally, the city promotes community-based waste segregation programs and strengthens barangay-level Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) to encourage household participation. Educational campaigns and partnerships with schools, NGOs, and businesses support behavioral change toward responsible waste management. Plans are also underway to pilot waste-to-energy initiatives and composting systems for organic waste to reduce landfill volume. These efforts aim to move Surigao City toward a circular economy, where resources are continually reused, reducing both emissions and environmental degradation.

Photo credit : PIO Surigao- Dumpsite in Barangay Silop

Figure 78. Data on waste collection and recovery

Total Waste Collection in 2023 19,416.655 tons (50 tons daily average)	
Residual Waste (87%)	Recovered Waste (13%)
16,848.664 tons	2,567.991 tons

Figure 79. Fabrication of Hollow Blocks using the Alternative Technology installed in the Sanitary Landfill Facility

SDG 14 LIFE BELOW WATER : *Conserve and sustainably use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.*

The City of Surigao's geographic composition and extensive coastal jurisdiction underscore the strategic importance of SDG14 – Life Below Water. Of the city's 54 barangays, 21 are island communities, and an additional 15 mainland barangays are located along the coast, many with extensive mangrove forests, representing 36 barangays or 67% of the city directly linked to marine ecosystems. The city's total coastline, including its islands, measures 246.389 kilometers, emphasizing the critical role of marine resource management in local development planning. Recognizing this, the city began implementing marine management policies and plans in the 1990s, ensuring sustainable use and protection of its aquatic resources.

In 1993, the City Ordinance No. 61, series of 1993, entitled Regulating Fishing and/or Fisheries in the City of Surigao, was enacted to supplement the national Fisheries Code. This ordinance introduced zoning of municipal waters and established allowable uses to ensure sustainable fisheries management. The city's municipal waters cover approximately 54,214.92 hectares, exceeding its land area of 24,534 hectares. Within this area, 1,461 hectares of mangroves have been designated for protection and propagation along the eastern mainland, contributing to coastal stabilization, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable livelihoods (*Figures 80 and 81*).

Figure 80. The Municipal Waters of the City of Surigao

Further strengthening marine resource management, the city enacted a 2008 ordinance designating mariculture zones, reserved for the cultivation of suitable species such as milkfish, shellfish, and seaweeds. These zones include conservation measures for biodiversity, water quality, and salinity monitoring. Following the impacts of Super Typhoon Odette (Rai) in 2021,the city, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and its Sustainable Livelihood Program, provided grant assistance to People's Organizations operating fish cages, enabling rapid recovery and resumption of operations (*Figure 82*). These initiatives demonstrate the city's proactive approach to sustainable marine resource management, disaster resilience, and support for coastal livelihoods.

Figure 81. The Mariculture Zones in the City of Surigao
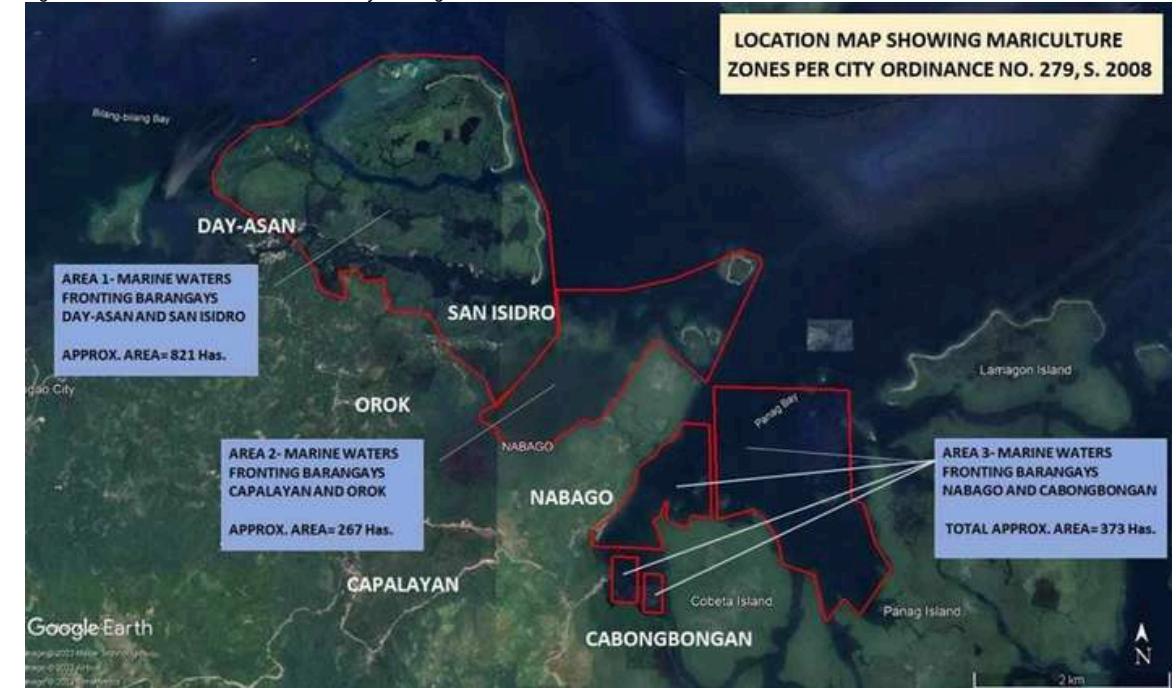
Figure 82. Relaunching Activities of the DSWD-supported Mariculture Sustainable Livelihood Program

The mariculture zone of Surigao City also encompasses a proclaimed Marine Protected Area (MPA) located in Barangay San Isidro, reinforcing the city's commitment to conserving critical marine ecosystems. Additional areas in the process of proclamation include Barangay Buenavista in Hikdop Island and Barangay Punta Bilar at the northeastern point of the mainland, demonstrating ongoing efforts to expand marine conservation coverage.

These initiatives are aligned with the SDG14 indicator on Marine Protected Areas and contribute to maintaining biodiversity, supporting fisheries sustainability, and enhancing ecosystem resilience (*Figure 83*).

Mangrove propagation and reforestation activities continue to form a core part of the city's coastal resource management strategy. Although planting activities were temporarily disrupted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of propagules planted in 2023 is gradually returning to pre-pandemic levels,

reflecting a steady recovery in conservation efforts (*Figure 84*). These initiatives not only protect shorelines but also provide habitat for marine species and support local livelihoods dependent on healthy coastal ecosystems. The city also implements pollution control measures in partnership with national agencies, local organizations, and community stakeholders, targeting the reduction of marine litter and other pollutants.

Waste recovery from these activities amounts to several tons per year, collected from various coastal areas. These interventions are complemented by sustained information and education campaigns aimed at enhancing environmental awareness and promoting responsible practices among coastal residents (*Figure 85*). Together, these efforts demonstrate Surigao City's holistic approach to sustainable coastal and marine management under SDG14.

Photo credit : PIO surigao - forest boardwalk in Day-asan Mangrove Forest, located in Surigao City (Philippines)

Figure 83. SDG14 Indicator on Marine Protected Area

Indicator	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)
Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	0.18	
Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas (total, in million hectares)	0.0095	
Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas, NIPAS and Locally managed MPAs	0.0095	0.70

Figure 84. Five-year data on the number of mangrove propagules planted indicator on Marine Protected Area
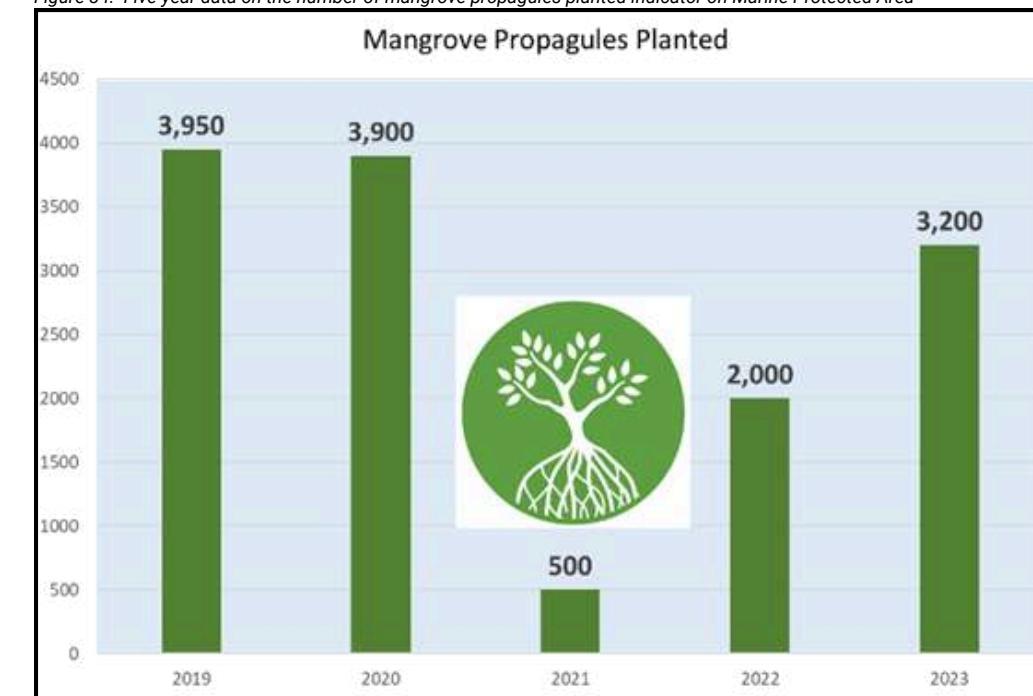
Figure 85. 2023 data on coastal clean-up activities conducted

2023 Clean-Up Activities Conducted	
Activity	Recovered Waste
Zero-Waste Month	110 kgs.
World Ocean's Month	8 sacks
International Coastal Clean-Up Day	52 sacks
Estero Clean-Up Drive	15 cu.m.

SDG 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS :
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions is prioritized due to its critical alignment with Surigao City's development objectives on peaceful communities, transparent and accountable governance, and participatory approaches across all local development initiatives. For the Voluntary Local Review (VLR), three targets are assessed using proxy indicators to gauge the city's performance in advancing SDG16 outcomes.

The first target, focusing on the reduction of all forms of violence and related death rates, demonstrates positive trends. Local crime statistics indicate a consistent decline over the last five years (2019–2023), with the average monthly crime rate decreasing from 40 cases per 100,000 population to 27 per 100,000 (*Figure 86*). Complementing this, the 2023 Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) survey shows a reduction in the proportion of households victimized by crime— from 0.91% in 2017 to 0.75% in 2023 (*Figure 87*), reflecting improved public safety and community resilience. Index crimes such as murder and homicide also show a modest decrease over the past three years (2021–2023).

A landmark achievement in promoting peace and security is Surigao City's declaration as an Insurgency-Free city in 2023, a milestone that subsequently enabled Surigao del Norte Province to attain the same status in 2024.

This declaration is grounded in the city meeting the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) criteria for liberating all barangays from the influence of the local communist group, the New People's Army. These accomplishments underscore the city's strong institutional framework and commitment to fostering safe, inclusive, and participatory communities.

Photo credit : PIO surigao-Battle of Surigao Street park

Figure 86. Five-year Crime Volume and Crime Rate Data

Figure 86. Five-year Crime Volume and Crime Rate Data

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Crime Volume	755	962	588	612	551
Average Monthly Crime Rate per 100,000	40	48	29	29	27
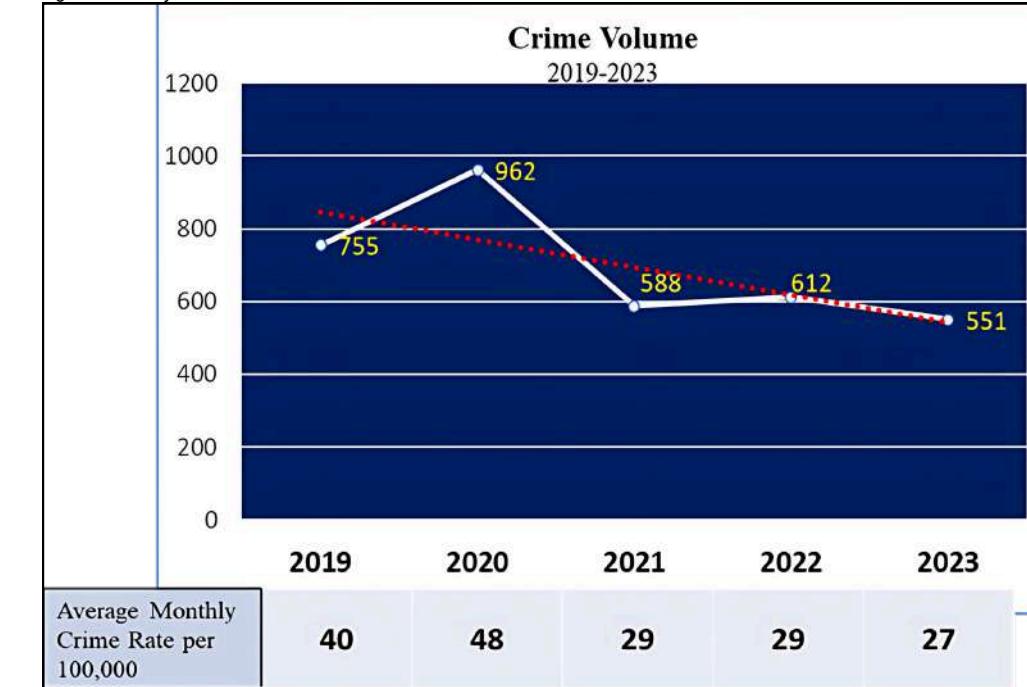
Figure 87. Five-year Data on Murder and Homicide
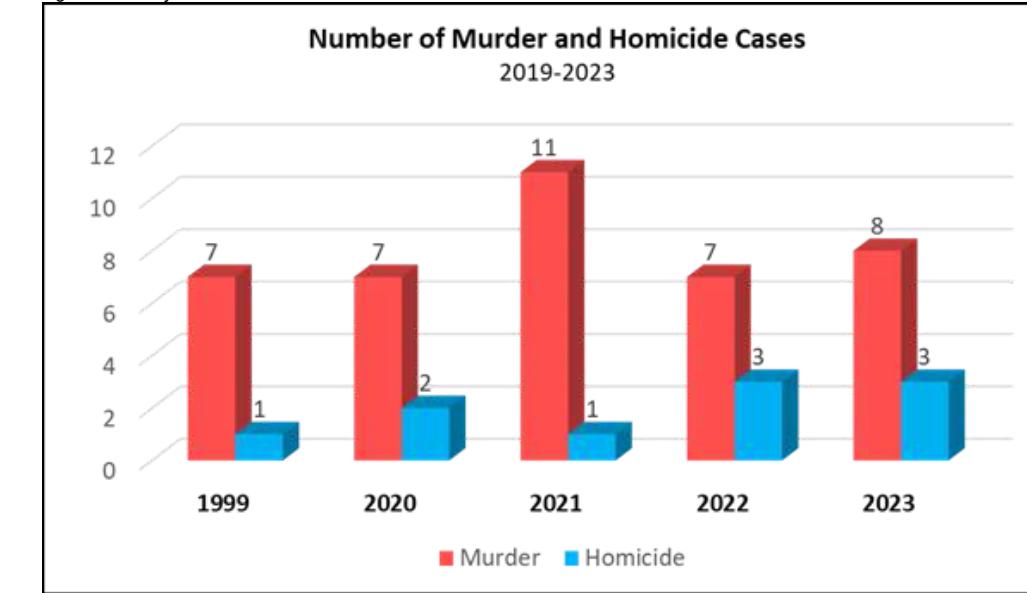
Number of Murder and Homicide Cases 2019-2023

	1999	2020	2021	2022	2023
Murder	7	7	11	7	8
Homicide	1	2	1	3	3

The second target under SDG16 focuses on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children. Monitoring for this target draws on data from the City Crisis Center for Women and Children and reports from Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) desks in local police stations.

Data reveal that female children account for more than twice the number of victims compared to males. Among the reported cases, physical abuse constitutes the largest share at 30%, while child trafficking (3%) and child labor (2%) represent smaller but still concerning proportions. In response, the city continues to strengthen institutional mechanisms, including the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC), extending its functionality down to the barangay level. Parallel efforts include sustained information, education, and advocacy campaigns on child rights, as well as community-based programs that empower citizens to report and prevent cases of child abuse *(Figures 88–90)*.

The city's overall peace and security accomplishments—including the recent insurgency-free declaration—are rooted in a whole-of-nation approach. This integrated strategy goes beyond law enforcement to include livelihood development in former conflict-affected areas, reintegration assistance for former rebels, infrastructure support, and broad-based education campaigns fostering social cohesion and community resilience.

Figure 88. Five-year Data on Child Abuse Cases
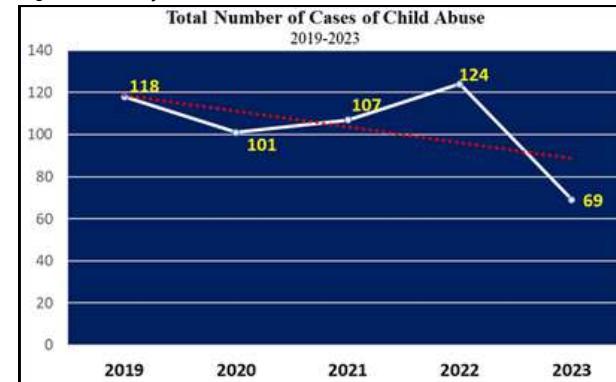
Figure 89. Five-year Data on Child Abuse Cases by Sex
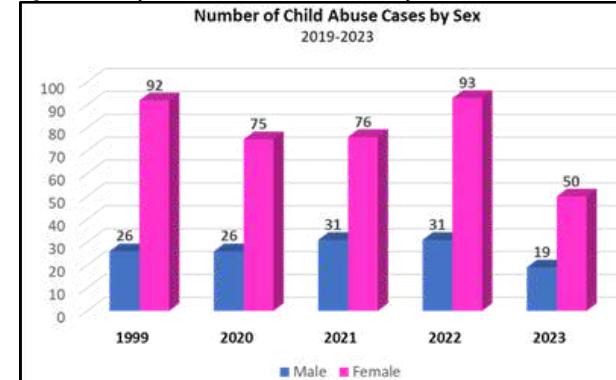
Figure 90. Breakdown of Child Abuse Cases in 2023
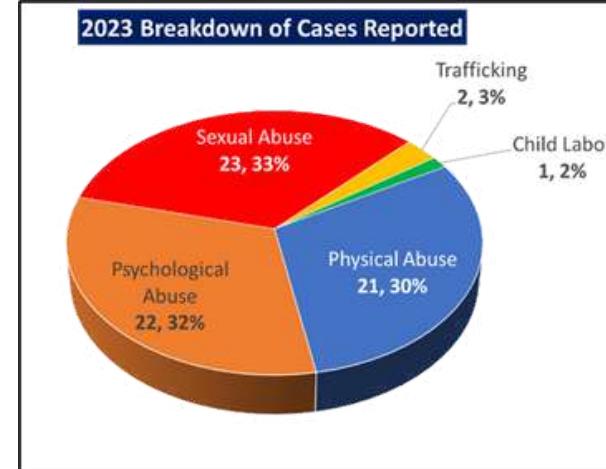
At the governance level, gender inclusivity and equality remain evident in city management structures. Women comprise 62% of the city's 24 department heads (*Figure 91*), demonstrating institutional commitment to equal opportunity and leadership representation.

Aligned with the SDG16 target on inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making, the city actively promotes the regular accreditation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and people's organizations (POs). Accreditation is conducted every three years in accordance with the Local Government Code of 1991, synchronized with the term of elected officials.

Data show that the number of accredited organizations increased by 11.18% between 2010 and 2022 (*Figure 92*). These organizations hold voting membership in the Local Development Council (LDC) and its five sectoral committees—social, economic, environmental, infrastructure, and institutional development. Representatives are also engaged in Local Special Bodies such as the Local Health Board, Local School Board, Peace and Order Council, Project Monitoring Committee, and Bids and Awards Committee, ensuring broad-based participation in governance processes.

Moreover, the city government maintains a balanced workforce, with female employees consistently outnumbering males, averaging 55.12% over the past five years. This reflects sustained institutional progress toward gender parity and inclusive governance.

Figure 91. Sex Disaggregated Data of LGU Workforce in the last 5 Years
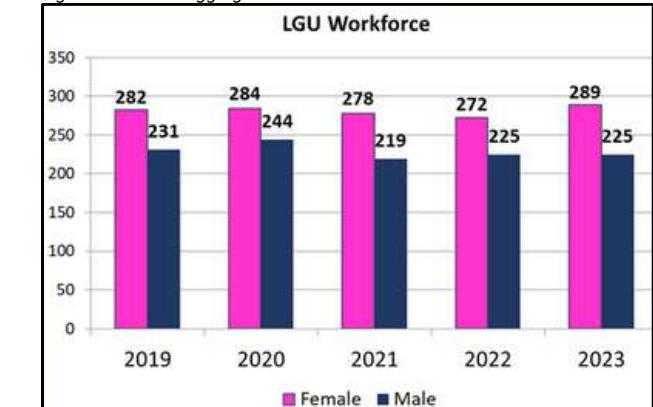

Figure 92. Comparative Number of Accredited Organizations
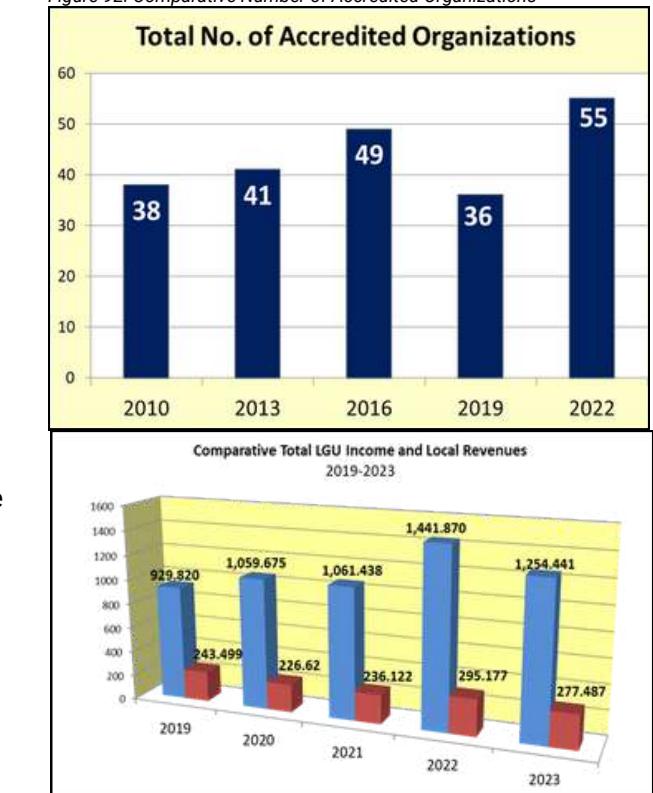
SDG 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS : *Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.*

The first target examines domestic resource mobilization, using the proportion of local budget funded by locally generated income as a proxy indicator. Based on the city's annual financial reports, total local government income increased at an average annual rate of 3.12% between 2019 and 2023, while locally sourced revenues grew slightly faster at 3.49% per year.

Local revenues accounted for an average of 22.48% of total income during this period. Although this reflects steady local fiscal effort, the city aims to reduce its dependence on national tax transfers to 60% through intensified local revenue generation and improved fiscal management (*Figures 93–94*).

Beyond its internal revenue sources, the city also maximizes national government financial support, not limited to its statutory share of national taxes but extending to program-based and project-based funding. In 2023, resource mobilization efforts through partnerships with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) enabled the implementation of agriculture and fisheries development projects amounting to ₱154.575 million (*Figure 95*).

The same strategy was effectively used in the social welfare sector, particularly in the post-disaster recovery of Super Typhoon Odette (Rai) victims.

Figure 93. Comparative Proportion of Local Revenues to Total LGU Income

Proportion of Local Revenues to Total LGU Income	
Year	**%**
2019	26.19
2020	21.39
2021	22.25
2022	20.47
2023	22.12

Figure 94. National Funding Support for Local Agriculture
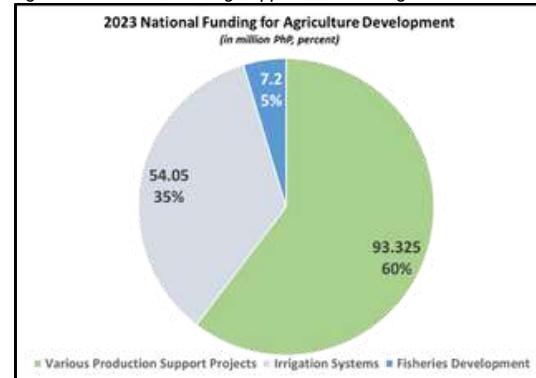
Figure 95. National Funding Support for Social Welfare
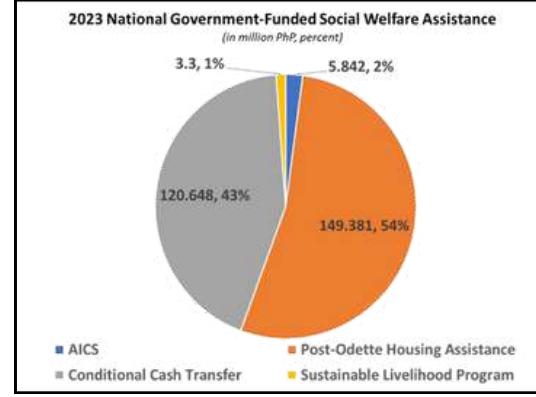
In 2023, the city mobilized ₱279.171 million, of which 54% was allocated for the repair and rebuilding of damaged houses. For infrastructure rehabilitation, the city accessed a significantly larger funding package of ₱874.642 million from various national government partners in 2023. This financed 65 projects across key facilities, including health stations, roads, water systems, and other public infrastructure (*Figure 96*). Projects in the pipeline further demonstrate the city's commitment to partnership-driven growth, including the ₱350 million Farm-to-Market Road Development Project under the World Bank-supported Philippine Rural Development Program, and the ₱800 million Surigao City Public Market Project under a public-private partnership (PPP) arrangement.

These initiatives illustrate how effective intergovernmental coordination and development cooperation compensate for limited local resources and catalyze sustainable development outcomes. Aligned with the second target of SDG 17 on fiscal sustainability and credit financing, the city maintains sound fiscal policies to ensure long-term debt sustainability. While national governments measure this through the debt-to-GDP ratio, local governments use the ratio of debt servicing to total regular income. The Local Government Code of 1991 sets a ceiling of 20% for this ratio, while the Department of the Interior and Local Government's (DILG) Local Governance Performance Management System (LGPMS) considers a ratio below 4% as "excellent."

Figure 96. National Funding Support for Infrastructure Projects

SOURCE OF FUND	TOTAL BUDGET ALLOCATION	NO. OF PROJECTS
Department of Health	₱ 34,250,000.00	32
DILG – Seal of Good Local Governance	7,000,000.00	1
Department of Agriculture	6,000,000.00	1
DILG – Financial Assistance to Local Government Units	31,000,000.00	1
DILG – Support to Barangay Development Program	4,000,000.00	1
Department of Public Works and Highways	792,392,064.25	29
TOTAL	**₱874,642,064.25**	**65**

Figure 97. Comparative Ratio of Debt Servicing Expenditures to Total Regular Income

in million PhP	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Regular Income	894.200	962.130	1,207.920	1,423.210	1,241.634
Expenses for Debt Servicing	20.306	19.074	17.828	19.631	31.159
Proportion (%)	2.27	1.98	1.48	1.38	2.51
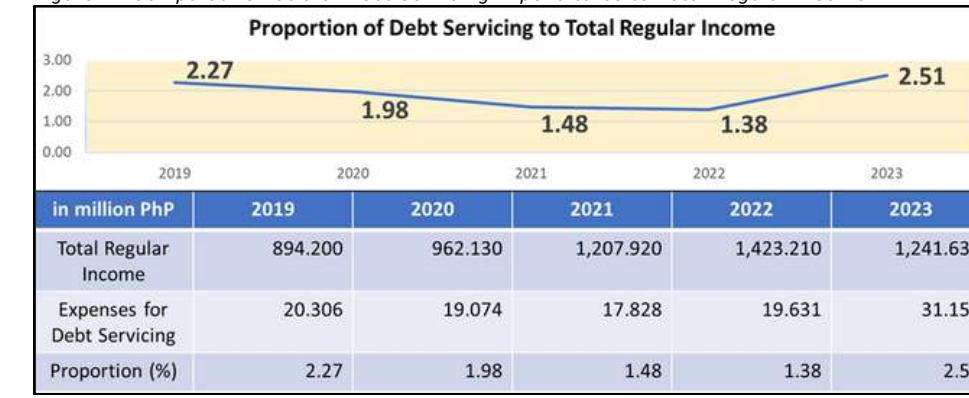
In the past five (5) years, the city's debt-servicing ratio consistently remained well within the prescribed limits, reaching a maximum of 2.51% in 2023, thereby maintaining an "excellent" fiscal performance rating (*Figure 97*). This demonstrates prudent financial management and the city's ability to responsibly leverage credit to finance development projects without compromising fiscal health.

The third target focuses on enhancing the use of enabling technologies, particularly information and communications technology (ICT), to expand public access to science, innovation, and capacity-building opportunities. This aligns closely with the city's long-term development vision of becoming a "Smart City by 2040", where digital infrastructure and ICT-driven governance play a central role. Monitoring for this target uses the proportion of households with internet access as the local indicator.

Despite geographic constraints—particularly the presence of 21 island barangays—the city has made progress through initiatives supported by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT). As part of the national Free Public Wi-Fi for All Program, six (6) public access points have been established in the urban center as of 2024. However, household-level connectivity remains a challenge, with only 42.62% of households reporting access to the internet in 2023 (*Figure 98*). To address this, the city continues to collaborate with national agencies and private telecommunications providers to expand digital infrastructure coverage, particularly in underserved island and upland communities, as part of its broader commitment to inclusive and technology-enabled development. See *Figure 99*.

Figure 98. National Funding Support for Social Welfare

	FREE WIFI PUBLIC ACCESS POINTS (as of CY2024)
Free WiFi FOR ALL	➤ DICT-SDN Office ➤ Surigao City Gym/City Hall ➤ Brgy. Washington Hall ➤ Surigao City DepEd Division ➤ Brgy. Washington District Health Center and Birthing Facility ➤ Surigao City Science Elementary School

Figure 99. Proportion of Households without Access to the Internet

Total No. of Households	Households without Access to the Internet	Proportion
39,558	22,698	57.38%

Photo credit : PIO Surigao - Barangay Taft Public Market , Surigao City

LA PROVINCIA
DE
SURIGAO
AL ILUSTRE PATRICIO
DR. JOSE RIZAL

VIII. CHALLENGES AND ENABLING FACTORS

Challenges

Unfamiliarity of Local Staff with the SDGs. The initial orientation revealed limited awareness of the SDGs among city personnel, including some department heads, except those directly involved in planning and social services. In response, the city launched a sustained information and advocacy campaign—such as displaying SDG posters in all offices—and institutionalized SDG alignment in annual accomplishment reports starting 2024. Beginning in 2026, departmental budget proposals will also be required to reflect SDG integration, further embedding the framework in local governance processes.

Data Gaps and Limitations in Analysis. The initial SDG monitoring revealed significant data gaps, particularly for indicators not readily available or disaggregated at the city level. While some raw data existed, such as contraceptive use figures, the absence of supporting demographic information limited accurate interpretation and analysis. Continuous consultations and technical meetings improved local capacity to identify proxy indicators, yet some data constraints persisted, leading to the exclusion of certain SDGs from the VLR's priority focus.

Inter-Agency Cooperation and Institutional Coordination. While established coordination mechanisms such as the Local Development Council facilitated collaboration, delays in data provision persisted due to limited personnel and competing agency priorities. This recurring challenge, common in data-driven initiatives, affected the timeliness of information sharing. To address this, the city intensified coordination efforts and formally requested each partner agency to designate a focal person to streamline data exchange and communication.

Enabling Factors

Several enabling factors contributed to the successful implementation of the city's first SDG Voluntary Local Review (VLR):

Availability of Data. The city maintains an established database system, primarily utilized in the preparation of annual accomplishment reports. Institutionalized participatory mechanisms ensure accessible and transparent data collection within the local planning process. These mechanisms proved instrumental in facilitating the VLR's implementation during its inception phase.

Declared Management Commitment to the SDGs. The City Mayor, as Local Chief Executive, and the City Vice Mayor, as head of the legislative council, have demonstrated clear leadership in advancing the localization of the SDGs. This strong executive and legislative support effectively constitute a policy declaration of the city government's dedication to achieving the SDGs. The commitment is consistently communicated to partner national agencies, the private sector, civil society, and the academe, reinforcing a whole-of-society approach to sustainable development.

Organization of the Project Team. The city established a dedicated team to oversee the implementation of the VLR, consistent with its long-standing approach to managing development initiatives.

Team members were carefully selected from existing career personnel based on their expertise and competencies. This arrangement ensures institutional continuity and capacity to sustain future VLR cycles with an experienced and cohesive team.

Technical and Financial Assistance. The partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) was instrumental in realizing the VLR project in Surigao City. While initial efforts were made to align the State of Local Governance Report with the SDGs, the process required more detailed technical rigor. UN-Habitat's technical expertise and financial support enabled the city to produce a comprehensive, data-driven VLR aligned with global reporting standards.

IX.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the city's experience in preparing its first SDG Voluntary Local Review (VLR), the following conclusions and recommendations focus on four key areas: *data management*, *development interventions, sustainability to strengthen local implementation*, and *monitoring of the SDGs*.

Data management. The SDG-VLR is inherently data-driven, and the availability and quality of data determine the accuracy of assessing local SDG progress. Despite existing gaps, the city successfully reported on 11 SDGs, highlighting the need to strengthen data sourcing and harmonize reporting systems across offices. Regular CBMS surveys, annual accomplishment reports, and the use of localized proxy indicators will enhance data completeness and enable a more comprehensive assessment in future VLR cycles.

Development Interventions. The first SDG-VLR identified critical areas requiring focused intervention, particularly poverty reduction, health outcomes, and food security. Targeted programs—such as enhanced poverty mapping, improved maternal and child health initiatives, and strengthened agricultural and nutrition programs—should be prioritized to reverse regressive trends. Continued efforts in education, gender equality, and community-based empowerment will ensure inclusive growth and resilience across all sectors.

SDG-VLR Institutionalization. Institutionalizing the SDG-VLR through local legislation and formal integration into planning, programming, and budgeting systems will ensure continuity beyond political cycles. This commitment will embed SDG tracking as a regular governance function, aligning with the city's long-term development agenda. Sustained political and administrative support will safeguard the process as a core mechanism for evidence-based policy and decision-making.

Cascading SDG Monitoring at the Household Level. Household-level SDG monitoring empowers families as active partners in local development, linking global goals directly to community well-being. The FACES project's household scorecard initiative—covering Sama Bajau and informal settler families—demonstrates an inclusive model for localized SDG tracking. Sustaining and scaling this approach through stronger barangay partnerships and local policy support will institutionalize community participation and enhance long-term impact.

The city's first VLR revealed varied progress across SDG targets, underscoring both achievements and areas requiring intensified action. Local governments play a pivotal role in translating global commitments into tangible outcomes that improve people's lives. Strengthened data systems, targeted interventions, and institutionalized processes will anchor Surigao City's continued contribution to the global SDG agenda

X. MILESTONES AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

Despite initial challenges, the City of Surigao successfully completed its first SDG Voluntary Local Review (VLR), achieving several milestones that highlight innovation, learning, and leadership in localizing the 2030 Agenda. The conduct of the VLR—though not mandated nationally—demonstrates the city's strong policy commitment to align local development priorities with the SDGs and to institutionalize evidence-based governance.

Innovation. Surigao City emerged as one of the pioneering cities in the Philippines to implement a VLR, introducing an innovative approach that strengthened SDG awareness and vertical integration—from city to barangay and provincial levels. This initiative influenced the Province of Surigao del Norte to undertake its own VLR and inspired regional and national engagement, including potential inclusion in the Philippines' Voluntary National Review (VNR). The participatory and consultative VLR process also enhanced local data systems and coordination mechanisms, identifying pathways for improved efficiency and collaboration.

Knowledge. The VLR generated a valuable knowledge product that other local governments and development stakeholders can replicate. It provided insights and lessons on aligning local actions with global goals, while fostering shared accountability among the government, civil society, academia, and the private sector.

The process strengthened awareness of the SDGs as a framework for inclusive development and contributed to the growing repository of local sustainability practices in the Philippines.

Motivation. The SDG framework provided the city with clear benchmarks for assessing development progress and recalibrating local priorities. Through the VLR, Surigao City identified areas of success and gaps that need policy attention, motivating departments to pursue more targeted and evidence-based interventions. The process also reinforced cross-sectoral collaboration and inspired other local governments to initiate their own SDG localization efforts.

Image Promotion. The successful completion of the SDG-VLR elevated Surigao City's profile as a model of good governance and sustainable urban development in the region. The initiative complements the city's ISO 9001:2015 certification and strengthens its positioning as a forward-looking, investment-ready, and globally aligned local government unit in the northeastern Pacific Rim of Mindanao.

Transition of coastal living conditions—from informal stilt houses to formalized Bajau housing developments designed to improve safety and quality of life.

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XII. ANNEXES

Annex 1 : Data Tables

SDG1: No Poverty

Target	Indicator	Latest Available Data (year)	Most Recent Data (year)	National Target (2030)	Trend
By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all the people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than US$1.25 a day	Proportion of employed population aged 15 years old and over living below the international poverty line of US$1.90 per day		16.7 (CBMS 2023)	5.4	
By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	Proportion of population living below the national poverty line	48.84% (CBMS 2017)	35.5% (CBMS 2023)	9.0	⬇️
By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	Proportion of currently married women of reproductive age (15-49 years old) who have their need for family planning satisfied (provided) with modern methods	55% (LGU 2015) CPR: 65%	36% (LGU 2023) CPR: 35% (Change of target every year)	100%	🔻
	Proportion of population with access to electricity	99.6% (SURNECO 2015)	100% (SURNECO 2023)	100%	⬆️
	Proportion of families with access to basic drinking water services	94.7% (2017 CBMS)	97.47% (CBMS 2023)	100%	⬆️
	Proportion of families with access to basic sanitation services	76% (LGU 2015)	91.03% (CBMS 2023)	100%	⬆️
	Proportion of families with	76% (LGU 2015)	90.7% (CBMS 2023)	100%	⬆️

Target	Indicator	Latest Available Data (year)	Most Recent Data (year)	National Target (2030)	Trend
	access to handwashing facility with soap and water				
	Proportion of families with access to secure tenure	86.2% (2015)	85.94% (2023)	100%	⬇
	Proportion of women ages 15-49 years who received antenatal care from skilled health personnel for the most recent birth	59% (2015)	98.93% (2023)	100%	⬆
	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	95% (2015)	98.93% (2023)	100%	⬆
	Proportion of women ages 15-49 years with postnatal check-up in first two days after birth	65% (2015)	91.07% (2023)	100%	⬆
	Proportion of all women aged 15-49 years who have ever used any contraceptive methods	53% (2015)	35.99% (2023)	100%	⬇
	Net Enrolment Rate	(2015)	(2023)		
	I. Kindergarten	91.5%	89.04%	100%	⬇
	I. Elementary	106.1%	91.84%	100%	⬇
	I. Secondary	64.4%	65.15%	100%	⬆
	Proportion of families with owned or owner-like possession of housing units	89.21% (2015)	85.94% (CBMS 2023)	100%	⬇
By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their	Number of deaths[1] attributed to disasters per 100,000	1,253 (ST Nitang 1984, International-Ike)	2.33 (ST Odette 2021, International - Rai)	0	⬆
	Number of missing persons	0 (2015)	0 (2023)	0	➡

Target	Indicator	Latest Available Data (year)	Most Recent Data (year)	National Target (2030)	Trend
exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters	attributed to disasters per 100,000				
	Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000		182,944 (2023)		
	The City of Surigao adopts and implements local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction	City DRRM Office established in 2011	Risk sensitive CLUP integrating DRR-CCA adopted in 2016		➡
Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions	Proportion of total local government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)	17.7% (2015) P101.4 million/ P573.02 million	23.06% (2023) P287.6 million/ P1.24 billion		⬆

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food for all year round	Prevalence of stunting (height for age 2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age	6.9	9.5	24.9	↑
	Prevalence of malnutrition for children under 5 years <-2 SD from the median of the WHO CGS (wasting)	9.29	3.3	3.7	↓
	Prevalence of malnutrition for children under 5 years >+2 SD from the median of the WHO CGS (overweight)		3.65		

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	2,635[1] 95.61%	2,220[1] 98.79%	100%	↑
	Proportion of births delivered in a health facility	2,610[1] 94.70%	2,220[1] 98.79%	100%	↑
By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming	Under-five mortality rate	10.89	11.87	20.7	↑
	Neonatal mortality rate	2.54	4.4	6.5	↑
	Infant Mortality Rate	7.26	9.67	9.8	↑

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births					
By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases	Number of new HIV infections (newly diagnosed cases/year)	180	27 (tested reactive)	0	↓
	Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population	168	629	0	↑
	Malaria incidence per 1,000 population	0	0	0	→
By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being	Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease	219[2] female = 96 male = 123	18[2] female = 7 male = 11	1.8 1.8 1.8	↑
	Mortality rate attributed to cancer	74[2] female = 34 male = 40	21[2] female = 9 male = 12	0.7 0.7 0.7	↑
	Mortality rate attributed to diabetes	24[2] female = 15 male = 9	5[2] female = 1 male = 4	0.4 0.4 0.4	↑
	Mortality rate attributed to chronic respiratory disease	38[2] female = 23 male = 15	229[2] female = 86 male = 143	0.2 0.2 0.2	↑
By 2030, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	Death rate due to road traffic injuries per 100,000 population		female = 1.17 male = 3.53	0.1 0.1	
By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services, including for family planning,	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate	36.72 (2022)	35.99	100	↓

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national					
Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable disease that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects on Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	Proportion of the target population with access to 3 doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis	4,147[3]	2,778[3] 89.21%		⬇
	Proportion of the target population with access to measles-containing-vaccine second dose	3,324[3]	2,626[3] 77.3%		⬇
	Proportion of the target population with access to pneumococcal conjugate 3rd dose (PCV3)	978[3]	2,814[3] 90.37%		⬆
	Proportion of Fully Immunized Children	79%	2,491 73.33%		⬇
Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing states	Government medical doctors density (per 10,000 population)		170		
	Government nursery and midwifery personnel density (per 10,000 population)		333		
	Government dentists' density (per 10,000 population)		2		

[1]number of births attended
[2]number of cases, deaths recorded for the disease
[3]number of persons administered with the vaccine

SDG 4: Quality Education

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes	Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics		Reading (both sexes) Grade 2 55.67% Grade 3 55.69%		
	Completion Rate Elementary	76.79	96.55	100	⬆
	• Female	74.41	98.04	100	
	• Male	79.31	94.84	100	
	Completion Rate Junior High School	64.6	78.89	100	⬆
	• Female	69.01	84.95	100	
	• Male	60.68	73.42	100	
	Completion Rate Senior High School	88.74	85.06	100	⬇
	• Female			100	
	• Male			100	
	Cohort Survival Rate Elementary	87.53	96.55	100	⬆
	• Female	89.25	98.04	100	
	• Male	85.90	94.84	100	
	Cohort Survival Rate Junior High School	81.62	78.89	100	⬆
	• Female	86.28	84.95	100	
	• Male	77.49	73.42	100	

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
	Cohort Survival Rate Senior High School		85.06	100	
	• Female			100	
	• Male			100	
By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	Technical-Vocational Education and Training certification rate		92.5%		
By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	Proportion of population with exposure to internet		42.62	100	
By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations	Gender Parity index in net enrolment rate				
	• Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	0.93	0.92	1.0	🔻
	• Ratio of girls to boys in junior high school	0.95	0.99	1.0	🔺
	• Ratio of girls to boys in senior high school		0.94	1.0	
By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	Basic Literacy Rate:	54	62	100	🔺
	• Female	27	24	100	🔻
	• Male	27	38	100	🔺

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all	Proportion of public schools with access to electricity	96.85 (2021)	100	100	🔺
	Proportion of public elementary schools with access to electricity	100	100	100	➡
	Proportion of public junior high school with access to electricity[1]	100	100	100	➡
	Proportion of public schools with access to the internet for pedagogical purposes	52.31	70.77	100	🔺
	Proportion of public elementary schools with access to the internet for pedagogical purposes	81.82	90.91	100	🔺
	Proportion of public junior high school with access to the internet for pedagogical purposes[1]	80.95	72.73	100	🔻
	Proportion of public schools with access to single-sex basic sanitation facilities		75.38	100	
	Proportion of public elementary schools with access single-sex basic sanitation facilities		95.45	100	
	Proportion of public schools with access to basic handwashing facilities		100	100	🔺

	Proportion of public elementary schools with access to basic handwashing facilities		100	100	⬆
	Proportion of public junior high school with access to basic handwashing facilities[1]		100	100	⬆
By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States	Number of Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) trainers trained		184		

[1]inclusive of senior high school

SDG 5: Gender Equality

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	Frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality non-discrimination on the basis of sex in the Philippines	• Local Gender and Development Code enacted 2007 • Children's Welfare Code enacted 2004	• Local Gender and Development Code updated 2024 • Local Code for the Protection of Children enacted 2024		
Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age	343[1]	411[1] 0.60	10.6	⬆
	Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months		30[1] 0.043	2.4	
	Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months		2[1] 0.0029	1.0	
	Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to psychological violence by a current or former intimate	40[1]	35[1] 0.051	10.3	⬇

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
	partner in the previous 12 months				
	Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months	48[1]	65[1] 0.094		⬆🔴
	Number of reported gender-based violence cases	469	507		⬆🔴
	Number of reported abuse cases for women and children	469	480		⬆🔴
	Number of reported cases among women	303	411		⬆🔴
	Number of reported cases among children	166	69		⬇🟢
Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	Proportion of seats held by women in local government • City Council • Barangay Council	8.33%	8.33% 35.65%	50.0%	
Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural	Total Number of holders of Emancipation Patents • Female • Male	1,305 409 896	2,283 595 1,688		⬆🟢

[1]data refers to the number of cases reported

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to basic drinking water services	Proportion of families with access to basic drinking water services	94.7% (2017 CBMS)	97.47% (CBMS 2023)	100%	⬆🟢
By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and open defecation , paying special attention to the needs of the women and girls and those in vulnerable situations	Proportion of families with access to basic sanitation services	76% (2015)	91.03% (CBMS 2023)	100%	⬆🟢
	Proportion of families with access to hand washing facility with soap and water	76% (2015)	90.7% (CBMS 2023)	100%	⬆🟢
By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, having the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally	Proportion of monitored bodies of water with good ambient water quality based on the water quality guidelines of the Clean Water Act • Dissolve Oxygen • Biochemical Oxygen Demand		7.12 0.89	100 100	

SDG 11 :Sustainable Cities and Communities

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	Proportion of urban population who are informal settlers	32%	20%	<1	⬇
By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations	Number of deaths attributed to disasters per 100,000	1,253 (ST Nitang 1984, International-Ike) 8 (M6.7 Surigao Earthquake 2017)	4 (ST Odette 2021, International - Rai)	0	⬇
	Number of missing persons attributed to disasters per 100,000	0	0	0	➡
	Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000	1,408 (M6.7 Surigao Earthquake)	182,944 (ST Odette 2021, International - Rai)		⬆
	The City of Surigao adopts and implements local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction	City DRRM Office established in 2011	Risk sensitive CLUP integrating DRR-CCA adopted in 2016		⬆

SDG 13: Climate Action

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
Strengthens resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries	Number of deaths attributed to disasters per 100,000	1,253 (ST Nitang 1984, International-Ike) 8 (M6.7 Surigao Earthquake)	4 (ST Odette 2021, International - Rai)	0	⬇
	Number of missing persons attributed to disasters per 100,000	0	0	0	⬆
	Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000	1,408 (M6.7 Surigao Earthquake)	182,944 (ST Odette 2021)		⬆
Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning	The city has long-term strategies, adaptation plans and adaptation communications		Presence of City DRRM Plan Climate and Disaster Risk Assessment integrated into the CLUP		

SDG 14: Life Below Water

Target	Indicator	Baseline Data (2015)	Most Recent Data (2023)	National Target (2030)	Trend
By 2020, conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information	Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas		0.18		
	Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas (total, in million hectares)		0.0095		
	Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas, NIPAS and Locally managed MPAs		0.0095	0.70	

Annex 2 : List of Figures