



Republic of the Philippines  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
DILG-NAPOLCOM Center, EDSA corner Quezon Avenue, Quezon City  
[www.dilg.gov.ph](http://www.dilg.gov.ph)



**MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR**  
**NO. 2024-066**

**TO : ALL PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS, CITY MAYORS, MUNICIPAL MAYORS, DILG REGIONAL, PROVINCIAL, AND CITY DIRECTORS, CITY AND MUNICIPAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS OFFICERS, AND OTHERS CONCERNED**

**SUBJECT : AMENDED GUIDELINES ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SISTER-CITY OR TOWN-TWINNING PROGRAM**

**DATE : MAY 07 2024**

**1. Background**

- 1.1. The Department champions the Sister-City or Town-Twinning Program, through which the Local Chief Executives (LCEs) or Highest Local Authorities, elected or appointed, as the case may be, may establish relationships or social agreements with one another. This has been one of the thrusts of the Department from 1982, the inaugural year of the Sister City or Town Affiliation Program to the inception of the Philippine International Sisterhood and Twinning Association (PHISTA) in 1986.
- 1.2. Local government partnership aims to foster understanding, friendship, and goodwill among different communities, as an integral part of the field of socio-cultural exchange, among others. However, over the years, the notion of town-twinning has increasingly been in the context of technical exchange and cooperation in the areas of trade and investments, information technology, health, agriculture, human development, sustainable tourism, and environmental management.
- 1.3. As an integral component of socio-cultural exchange, the overarching objective of local government partnerships has always been to foster understanding, friendship, and goodwill among and between diverse communities.
- 1.4. On November 25, 1997, this Department issued Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 97-306, with the subject: *"Guidelines in Establishing National or International Sister-City or Town-Twinning Relationships, Amending for the Purpose Memorandum Circular No. 94-93 dated June 8, 1994,"* which established the guidelines on establishing said relationships

amongst local government units (LGUs), including the roles and responsibilities of this Department and partner Office.

- 1.5. Shifting global priorities have emerged over the past two decades, prompting the updated guidelines to address contemporary issues like sustainable development, climate change, and disaster risk reduction, among others, by encouraging LGUs to focus on these areas through their sister-city partnerships. Also, new best practices and models for establishing and managing these relationships may have emerged and incorporating them into the updated guidelines can help LGUs build stronger and more successful partnerships.

## **2. Scope/ Coverage**

- 2.1. All concerned provinces, cities, and municipalities which currently have existing town-twinning or sister-city relationships with other local governments
- 2.2. All provinces, cities, and municipalities which intend to establish such relationships for the purposes to be elaborated herein

## **3. Purpose**

- 3.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to the LGUs in the establishment of a sister-city or town-twinning relationship, and to enumerate the roles and responsibilities of LGUs, concerned partner offices/agencies, and this Department; and,
- 3.2. This policy also aims to establish a general framework for the maintenance, establishment, implementation, and termination of sister-city or town-twinning relationships.

## **4. Legal Bases**

- 4.1. **1987 Constitution Article X, Section 2** provides that the Local Governments shall enjoy local autonomy.
- 4.2. **1987 Constitution Article X, Section 13** provides that *"local government units may group themselves, consolidate or coordinate their efforts, services, and resources for purposes commonly beneficial to them in accordance with law;"*
- 4.3. **Local Government Code (LGC) Section 3. Operative Principle of Decentralization.** *The formulation and implementation of policies and measures on local autonomy shall be guided by the following operative principles, as follows...*

- 4.3.1. Section 3 (f). *Local Government Units may group themselves, consolidate or coordinate their efforts, services, and resources for purposes commonly beneficial to them;*
- 4.3.2. Section 3 (h). *There shall be a continuing mechanism to enhance local autonomy not only by legislative enabling acts but also by administrative and organizational reforms;*
- 4.4. **LGC Section 16. General Welfare.** *Every local government unit shall exercise the powers expressly granted, those necessarily implied therefrom, as well as powers necessary, appropriate, or incidental for its efficient and effective governance, and those which are essential to the promotion of the general welfare.*
- 4.5. **LGC Section 17. Basic Services and Facilities.**
- 4.6. **LGC Section 22. Corporate Powers, (a) Every Local Government Unit, as a corporation, shall have the following powers....:**
- 4.6.1. *(5) To enter into contracts and*
- 4.6.2. *(6) To exercise such power as are granted to corporations, subjects to the limitation of powers provided in the LGC and other laws.*
- 4.6.3. *(c) Unless otherwise provided in this Code, no contract may be entered into by the local chief executive in behalf of the local government unit without prior authorization by the sanggunian concerned. A legible copy of such contract shall be posted at a conspicuous place in the provincial capitol or the city, municipal or barangay hall.*
- 4.7. **LGC Section 23. Authority to Negotiate Grants.-** *Local chief executives may, upon authority of the sanggunian, negotiate and secure financial grants or donations in kind, in support of the basic services or facilities enumerated under Section 17 hereof, from local and foreign assistance agencies without necessity of securing clearance or approval therefor from any department, agency, or office of the National Government or from any higher local government unit: Provided, That projects financed by such grants or assistance with national security implications shall be approved by the national agency concerned: Provided, further, That when such national agency fails to act on the request for approval within thirty (30) days from receipt thereof, the same shall be deemed approved.*
- The local chief executive shall, within thirty (30) days upon signing of such grant agreement or deed of donation, report the nature, amount, and terms of such assistance to both Houses of Congress and the President.*
- 4.8. **LGC Section 33. Cooperative Undertakings Among Local Government Units.** *Local government units may, through appropriate ordinances, group themselves, consolidate, or coordinate their efforts,*

*services, and resources for purposes commonly beneficial to them. In support of such undertakings, the local government units involved may, upon approval by the Sanggunian concerned after a public hearing conducted for the purpose, contribute funds, real estate, equipment, and other kinds of property and appoint or assign personnel under such terms and conditions as may be agreed upon by the participating local units through Memoranda of Agreement.*

- 4.9. LGC Section 35. Linkages with People's and Non-Governmental Organizations.** *Local government units may enter into joint ventures and such cooperative arrangements with people's and non-governmental organizations to engage in the delivery of certain basic services, capability-building and livelihood projects, and to develop local enterprises to improve productivity and income, diversify agriculture, spur rural industrialization, promote ecological balance, and enhance the social well-being of the people.*

- 4.10. LGC Section 444 (b)(1)(vi), Section 455 (b)(1)(vi) and Section 465 (b)(1)(vi)**

- 4.10.1.** Local Chief Executive shall represent the city/municipality/province **in all its business transactions and sign in its behalf all bonds, contracts, and obligations, and such other documents upon authority of the sangguniang bayan/panlungsod/panlalawigan or pursuant to law or ordinance;**

## **5. Policy Content and Guidelines**

### **5.1. General Guidelines**

- 5.1.1.** Sister-City or Town-Twinning is the highest form of inter-local government unit partnership, forging local government exchange and cooperation in the pursuit of mutually-beneficial objectives along the socio-cultural, environmental and economic aspects of development.
- 5.1.2.** All LGUs (i.e.: provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays), regardless of size or classification, may forge partnerships with their counterparts or with other local governments in the country or abroad.
- 5.1.3.** In order to capitalize on the established relationships, the following areas of collaboration and thematic areas of activities may be pursued by the LGUs **so long as the same are aligned with an LGU's Annual Investment Plan (AIP) and/or directly related in their Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP):**
- 5.1.3.1.** Exchange Visits
  - 5.1.3.2.** Club Affiliations or Development or Relations
  - 5.1.3.3.** Organized Tours

- 5.1.3.4. Correspondence or Sending of Mementos
- 5.1.3.5. Exchange of Music and Cultural Plays, including Publications; and
- 5.1.3.6. Exchange of Professional and Technical Expertise, and Cooperation

## **5.2. Roles and Responsibilities of Local Government Units**

### **5.2.1. Establishment or Designation of an appropriate office or unit -**

The Local Chief Executive (LCE) may designate an existing office or department, to be known as the Local Government Relations Unit (LGRU), which shall be the coordinative body of the LGU to discuss, craft, and finalize proposals in relation to possible town-twinning with other LGUs or local governments abroad.

If fiscally feasible, the LCE may create such Unit and may be placed under his direct supervision or any department that the LCE deemed it appropriate.

### **5.2.2. The LGRU shall perform the following functions:**

- 5.2.2.1. Formulation of LGU Profile - The LGRU shall formulate a brief profile, in a brochure format, of the Province, City, Municipality, or Barangay, taking into consideration the expanding coverage of sister-city or town-twinning, to include technical exchange and cooperation in various economic undertakings.
- 5.2.2.2. Discuss among themselves the affiliation and may define therein the characteristics of the local authority to affiliate with, based on historical, socio-political/cultural, and economic interests, and guided thereby, craft a proposal containing the parameters of the relationship with their counterpart national or international local government.
  - 5.2.2.2.1. A separate dialogue or consultation with stakeholders to identify the needs in relation to the capabilities of the sister LGU and, consequently, to maximize the sister-city relationship and capitalize on available resources shall also be conducted. This dialogue shall involve concerned Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), particularly those whose areas of expertise are the subject matter of said partnership.
- 5.2.2.3. Issuance of Authority by the Sanggunian (if no existing law or ordinance) for the LCE to negotiate and enter into an agreement (local or international)- Before the start of any negotiations to a possible sister-city or town twinning agreement, the Sanggunian must pass a document

authorizing the LCE to negotiate and enter into any agreements.

**5.2.2.4.** Approval of the Sister-City or Town-Twinning Proposal through Sanggunian Resolution - Upon completion of the initial administrative requirements or affiliation such as, the proposed national or international partner or partners, and the Local Government Profile, the LGRU shall then recommend its approval to the Sanggunian, with endorsement from the LCE, for legislative approval and support.

**5.2.2.5.** In case the MOU/MOA provide for any grant agreement or donation (cash or in kind) to the concerned local government unit, **the LCE shall submit a report within 30 days to Congress (House of the Representatives and Senate) and the Office of the President upon its signing containing the nature, amount and terms of the grant, donation or assistance.**

### **5.2.3. Establishment of Partnership**

**5.2.3.1.** All sister City or Town Twinning Partnerships should adhere to applicable laws, rules and regulations of the Philippines.

#### **5.2.3.2. On Proposed Local Partnership**

**5.2.3.2.1.** Upon approval by the Sanggunian, the LGU, through the LCE, shall write to their chosen local government counterpart to signify interest in establishing a sister-city or town-twinning partnership, with the following documents:

**5.2.3.2.1.1.** Local Government Profile;

**5.2.3.2.1.2.** Sanggunian Resolution endorsing the affiliation initiative;

**5.2.3.2.1.3.** Sanggunian Resolution authorizing the Local Chief Executive to negotiate and enter into an agreement;

**5.2.3.2.1.4.** Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement<sup>1</sup> (MOA) as the case may be, highlighting the proposed Areas of Partnership as well as the roles and responsibilities of the contracting parties; and

**5.2.3.2.1.5.** List of Community Groups or Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), supporting the proposed partnership.

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is preferred to be executed if the agreement requires obligations from the LGUs like provision of funding, exchange of services and technical expertise among others to make the obligation legally binding between the parties and subject on the existing laws, rules and regulations of the Philippines.

- 5.2.3.2.2.** Acceptance of Partnership - The counterpart local government shall signify its acceptance of the proposed partnership by furnishing the proposing LGU with their (1) Local Government Profile; and (2) Acceptance of partnership to be signed by their Local Chief Executive, copy furnished the concerned City/Municipal Local Government Operations Officer/City Director.

**5.2.3.3. On Proposed International Partnership**

- 5.2.3.3.1.** Upon approval by the Sanggunian of the sought partnership, the LGU, through the LCE, shall submit the following documents, in digital/e-copies, to this Department, through the Bureau of Local Government Supervision (BLGS):

- 5.2.3.3.1.1.** Letter of the LCE informing the DILG of the interest in establishing a sister-city or town-twinning partnership;
- 5.2.3.3.1.2.** Local Government Profile;
- 5.2.3.3.1.3.** Sanggunian Resolution endorsing the affiliation initiative;
- 5.2.3.3.1.4.** Sanggunian Resolution authorizing the Local Chief Executive to negotiate and enter into an agreement;
- 5.2.3.3.1.5.** Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement<sup>2</sup> (MOA) as the case may be, highlighting the proposed Areas of Partnership as well as the roles and responsibilities of the contracting parties; and,
- 5.2.3.3.1.6.** List of Community Groups or Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), supporting the proposed partnership, if applicable.

- 5.2.3.3.2.** The BLGS, shall record, review and evaluate the proposed partnership. Once the documents submitted have been found to be complete and in order, the BLGS shall forward the documents to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the National Security Concil (NSC), for further assessment and clearance, as well as to the following concerned National Government Agency, as applicable:

- 5.2.3.3.2.1.** Department of Migrant Workers - for matters concerning seasonal workers;

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<sup>2</sup> Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is preferred to be executed if the agreement requires obligations from the LGUs like provision of funding, exchange of services and technical expertise among others to make the obligation legally binding between the parties and subject on the existing laws, rules and regulations of the Philippines and its foreign counterpart.

- 5.2.3.3.2.2. The Department of National Defense and the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency - for matters concerning national security and peace and order
  - 5.2.3.3.2.3. Department of Agriculture - for agricultural partnership, whether field work or research
  - 5.2.3.3.2.4. Department of Information and Communications Technology - for information and communications technology partnerships
  - 5.2.3.3.2.5. Department of Tourism - for tourism and cultural exchanges
  - 5.2.3.3.2.6. Department of Trade and Industry - for economic and commercial partnerships
  - 5.2.3.3.2.7. Department of Health - for health-related partnerships i.e. medical missions, sharing of medical technologies, and the like
  - 5.2.3.3.2.8. Department of Environment and Natural Resources - for environment-related partnerships; and
  - 5.2.3.3.2.9. other concerned National Government Agencies and Instrumentalities.
- 5.2.3.3.3. Upon receipt of the cleared documents from the DFA, the NSC, and the concerned NGA, as applicable, the Department, thru the BLGS, shall write to the Local Chief Executive concerned, informing them that they may proceed with the negotiation process with their counterpart foreign local government, attached the documents from DFA, NSC and concerned NGA, as applicable.

The said letter shall be part of the supporting documents when requesting for Foreign Travel Authority to this effect.

#### **5.2.4. Compliance with COA Guidelines**

- 5.2.4.1. All LGUs shall comply with all applicable guidelines from the Commission on Audit (COA), and other pertinent laws, rules, and regulations relative to the utilization of donations, of whatever nature.
- 5.2.4.2. All LGUs shall comply with all applicable and pertinent laws, rules, and regulations relative to official travels and/or visits, as cases may be.

#### **5.3. Roles and Responsibilities of the DILG:**

- 5.3.1. The Department, thru the Bureau of Local Government Supervision (BLGS) shall:



**5.3.1.1.** Act as the Secretariat of the Sister-City or Town-Twinning Initiative, and shall promote sister-city and town-twinning partnerships;

**5.3.1.2.** Upon receipt of supporting documents stated under item 5.2.3.3.1, conduct initial assessment and if found complete and in order, shall endorse to the concerned National Government Agency for further inputs or comments, or shall take the initiative to conduct a meeting with concerned agencies to discuss the proposed international partnership.

In case the submission is incomplete, BLGS shall inform, through letter, the lacking documents to the concerned LGUs, copy furnished the concerned DILG Regional Office.

**5.3.1.3.** Coordinate with concerned agencies in the furtherance of sister city or town-twinning concerns;

**5.3.1.4.** Provide assistance, as may be necessary, to LGUs interested in forging partnership with their counterparts, both local and international;

**5.3.1.5.** Establish a monitoring mechanism to:  
i. Maintain a database on Sister City and Town-Twinning Program which contains the following minimum information, and may be subject to further review:

<b>Province/City/ Municipality In the Philippines</b>	<b>Sister-City (Local) <i>(please specify the name of the City/LGU)</i></b>	<b>Sister-City (International) <i>(please specify the name of the City/LGU)</i></b>	<b>Type of Document <i>(e.g. MOU, MOA)</i></b>	<b>Effectivity Date/Date Signed</b>	<b>Nature and Scope of Agreement</b>

ii. Document best practices under sister-city relations to encourage other LGUs to follow suit.

**5.3.1.6.** The BLGS shall also conduct IEC campaign on the sister-city/town-twinning program and develop measures which will address the gaps and challenges as to the establishment and implementation of the sister-city relationships.

#### **5.4. Roles and Responsibilities of DILG Regional and Field Offices:**

**5.4.1.** City/Municipal Local Government Operations Officers/City Directors/Provincial Directors shall:

- 5.4.1.1.** Provide assistance, as requested, in the preparation of the Local Government Profile for the sister-city or town-twinning purposes;
- 5.4.1.2.** Provide assistance in the selection, and correspondence with, or confirmation of interest to affiliate with, the proposed local or international local government;
- 5.4.1.3.** Ensure to obtain a copy of the signed MOU/MOA and other related documents, and shall endorse to the concerned Provincial Office (for Component Cities and Municipalities) or Regional Office (for Highly Urbanized Cities and Independent Component Cities);
- 5.4.1.4.** Obtain copies of all documents relating to said partnerships within their area of jurisdiction, and submit to the BLGS, thru channels, for the development of a national database of local government units who have existing local and international partnership;
- 5.4.1.5.** Review and endorse to concerned Regional Office the approved MOUs/MOAs and other related documents, and documents for proposed international partnerships; and
- 5.4.1.6.** Monitor the compliance of component LGUs on the implementation of this issuance.

**5.4.2. Regional Directors:**

- 5.4.2.1.** Cause the widest dissemination of this Memorandum Circular to all Local Government Units under their jurisdiction;
- 5.4.2.2.** Review and endorse to the BLGS the approved MOUs/MOAs and other related documents, and documents for proposed international partnerships;
- 5.4.2.3.** Communicate to concerned LGUs any information that may be endorsed by the DILG BLGS;
- 5.4.2.4.** Monitor the compliance of component LGUs on the implementation of this issuance.

**6. Repealing Clause**

All DILG orders and other issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby superseded, repealed and/or modified accordingly.


## 7. Feedback

Related queries may be directed to the DILG Bureau of Local Government Supervision through the Local Government Relations Division at Telephone Nos. (02) 8876-3454 loc. 4201 4203 or 4206 to 07, or email at [dilg.blgsigrd@gmail.com](mailto:dilg.blgsigrd@gmail.com).

## 8. Effectivity

This Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately.

## 9. Approving Authority

  
ATTY. BENJAMIN C. ABALOS, JR.  
Secretary

