

Improving the Citizen Experience: How the Anti-Red Tape Act is shaping public service delivery in the Philippines



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Corruption is usually discussed in the context of who stole what and how much; thus, the discussion of how it impacts efficiency in public service delivery is lost.
- The more well-known anti-corruption laws in the Philippines focus more on transparency, ethics, codes of conduct, and the respective penalties. Legislation seldom integrates citizen-based feedback or specific performance monitoring and evaluation measures that directly impact public service delivery.
- The Anti-Red Tape Act (ARTA) is perhaps the only measure that looks at efficiency from the citizens' perspective and aims to curb systemic corruption by providing guidelines on how an efficient government office should operate.
- Governance is a shared responsibility, and citizens should be made aware that they can also be a part of the solution in curbing corruption, eradicating red tape, and improving public service delivery by engaging with the government responsibly, giving constructive feedback, and knowing their rights.

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Founded in 2012, Bantay.PH is a youth-based good governance movement incubated by the Makati Business Club. The project's primary service is to provide educational and volunteer opportunities to citizens who want to espouse good governance especially in frontline government transactions, through a synthesis of tech-based strategies, school-based programs, citizen monitoring, and social media engagement.

To know more about the project, go to www.bantay.ph, or email info@bantay.ph.

INTRODUCTION

Corruption in the Philippines is often portrayed in the context of corrupt officials and their tangled web of scandals. The crimes are declared unethical and a violation of public trust, and the implications on the systems of governance—the everyday machinery that citizens interact with—are rarely discussed nor addressed. Corruption is usually discussed in the context of who stole what and how much; thus, the discussion of how it impacts efficiency in public service delivery is lost.

Common corrupt practices, paired with the general public's mindset that poor public service has always been and will remain poor, compromises service delivery in that the types of services government should render its citizens and the quality of the service are viewed as separate matters. Hence, citizen and government engagement is low and unconstructive.

To illustrate, the more well-known anti-corruption laws in the Philippines focus primarily on transparency, ethics, codes of conduct, and the respective penalties. Legislation seldom integrates citizen-based feedback or specific performance monitoring and evaluation measures that directly impact public service delivery. Looking at all of the anti-corruption laws in the country, the Anti-Red Tape Act (ARTA) is perhaps the only measure that looks at efficiency from the citizens' perspective and aims to curb systemic corruption by providing guidelines on how an efficient government office should operate. What sets the ARTA apart from other anti-corruption laws is that its approach is more preventive than it is punitive.

This research report focuses on the ARTA and the efforts of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and Bantay.PH—a good governance initiative incubated by the Makati Business Club—in supporting the law's mandate. On-the-ground insights and recommendations for improved service delivery gathered by both the CSC and Bantay.PH will be presented in latter sections of the report.

THE ANTI RED TAPE ACT – AN OVERVIEW

Enacted in 2007, the ARTA mandated government agencies to improve efficiency in the delivery of services to the public by reducing bureaucratic red tape, preventing graft and corruption, and providing penalties thereof.

Figure 1 outlines the requirements of the ARTA. In sum, ARTA emphasizes the government's commitment to fighting corruption in the bureaucracy by directing agencies, corporations, and financial institutions with government interest to develop citizen's charters to serve as guidelines of conduct for employees (Brillantes, 2010). It aims to promote transparency by developing frontline service standards.

In 2009, the CSC was given the responsibility of monitoring ARTA compliance and assessing performance in government frontline services (Gainer, 2015). The law mandates that a Report Card Survey (RCS), designed by the CSC, should be carried out to facilitate the monitoring process.

THE REPORT CARD SURVEY – MANDATE AND PROGRESS

The RCS is an evaluation tool that provides a quantitative measure of actual public service user perceptions on quality, efficiency, and adequacy of different frontline services, as well as a critical evaluation of the office or agency, and its personnel. In addition to the survey, the CSC launched a hotline in 2012 called Contact Center ng Bayan (CCB) that citizens can call to lodge complaints, give feedback, and file reports regarding their transactions with frontline government services.

The RCS and the CCB are effective tools that can be used to accomplish three targets: 1) both mechanisms provide essential insights from two perspectives—from point of view of government standards as mandated by ARTA in the case of the RCS, and from the citizen end-users' own experience, regardless of the users' awareness of the ARTA in the case of the CCB; 2) the tools measure the government agencies' level of compliance with the ARTA and show on a macro level if there are widespread improvements in government service; and 3) on a micro level, the tools reveal which specific agencies have been improving or regressing and in which areas will reforms need to be instituted.

On the measurement of ARTA compliance seen in Table 1, since 2012, majority of offices have been ranked “good.” Moreover, the number of “excellent” offices has been increasing every year, while the number of “failed” offices has been decreasing. With a growing number of agencies surveyed, this trend may indicate a broad and steady improvement in the frontline services of the covered public entities, at least from the standpoint of the standards outlined in the ARTA.

On the other hand, the data from the CCB offers different and varying perspectives, serving as an on-the-ground insight of how ARTA implementation translates in everyday transactions and interactions of citizens, regardless of whether the citizen is aware of the ARTA's provisions or not. In the past three years, the top two offices with the highest number of complaints filed against them remained in the same position for three years. Other offices like the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) have managed to get out of the top 10 list in two years' time. Table 2 summarizes the agencies with the highest number of complaints. However, the number of complaints lodged against each of the covered agencies over the years was unavailable as of publication, precluding a more thorough analysis of the observed trends.

The GSIS case was cited by the CSC as an excellent example of how feedback from the RCS and CCB can push government agencies into improving their services. The CSC noted that in the latter part of 2013, the GSIS constantly coordinated with the ARTA Program Management Team and the

Figure 1



Table 1: Report Card Survey Results (by number of agencies surveyed)

	FAILED 69.99 and below	ACCEPTABLE 70-70.99	GOOD 80-80.99	OUTSTANDING 90-100 with a failed rating in any sub-area	EXCELLENT 90-100 with a failed rating in any sub-area	TOTAL
2012	150	90	309		50	599
2013	67	101	557	36	168	929
2014	39	80	636	10	258	1023
2015	15	43	697	6	353	1114

Source: Civil Service Commission

Table 2: Government agencies with the highest number of complaints

RANK	2013	2014	2015
1	Land Transportation Office	Land Transportation Office	Land Transportation Office
2	Social Security Office	Social Security Office	Social Security Office
3	Government Service Insurance System	Land Registration Authority	Bureau of Internal Revenue
4	Bureau of Internal Revenue	Bureau of Internal Revenue	Land Registration Authority
5	Professional Regulation Commission	Home Development Mutual Fund	Home Development Mutual Fund
6	Land Registration Authority	National Bureau of Investigation	Philippine Health Insurance Corporation
7	Home Development Mutual Fund	Department of Health (Hospitals)	Department of Foreign Affairs
8	National Statistics Office (PSA)	Government Service Insurance System	National Bureau of Investigation
9	Philippine Health Insurance Corporation	Philippine Statistics Authority	Philippine Statistics Authority
10	Department of Foreign Affairs	Professional Regulation Commission	Land Bank of the Philippines

Source: Contact Center ng Bayan Official Report

CCB to formulate an action plan to reduce the number of complaints the agency received. This resulted in GSIS rising from being ranked 3rd in the list of agencies with the most number of complaints in 2013, to 8th in 2014, to finally getting out of the top 10 in 2015. The steady improvement of the GSIS in resolving client complaints and garnering high scores on the RCS earned the agency a Seal of Excellence from the CSC, also in 2015.

Furthermore, CCB data on the nature of complaints also provide an insight as to where and how exactly government offices can improve their public service delivery. As seen in Table 3, slow processing, discourtesy of front-

liners, and non-observance of the “no noon break rule” are the most common complaints of citizens.

An interesting trend that can be observed from the CCB data is the overwhelming increase of complaints in virtually all types of offenses. This can be seen as either an indicator of a worsening condition of direct government services in the last two years from the point of view of citizen experience, or a reflection of more active citizen engagement with government through the use of the CCB. Whichever is the case, this connotes the need to further encourage the public to utilize the CCB reporting system to instigate positive change

and for government to further refine its systems.

The CSC, nevertheless, is aware of the gaps. Supporting the aforementioned conclusions, the aggressive promotion of the CCB has already been identified as an action point. According to the 2014/2015 Survey of Enterprises on Corruption, public awareness of the CCB was low, but the intention to report red tape experienced was high—77% in enterprises and 59% in the general public. Furthermore, the CSC identifies an additional action point: strengthening the CCB’s systems, such that it will become the unified feedback mechanism for all government agencies.

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Indeed, the value of citizen involvement in governance, especially in improving frontline service delivery cannot be understated. While the RCS and the CCB are, by themselves, strong tools for measuring government performance and identifying weak spots, the need to further empower citizens to be actively involved at holding their officials accountable exists. The problem was not so much the lack or weakness of legislation, but rather in its implementation, and that citizens are critical in the effective enforcement of policies.

Thus, recognizing the indispensable role of citizens and civil society in this endeavor, the Makati Business Club began incubating a young good governance initiative that seeks to address the problem of red tape through on-the-ground monitoring, community- and youth-based information drives, and strong partnerships with the government.

Founded in 2012, Bantay.PH monitors ARTA compliance of government offices with a different approach—technology and youth engagement are both utilized to monitor the quality of public service delivery. Bantay.PH’s underlying philosophy is that citizens are the end-users of government services and thus it is only proper that the citizens’ point of view is considered when determining government performance.

Bantay.PH aims to uplift the standard of government services through an informed and empowered citizenry. The initiative believes that if people are aware of their rights, they can hold

Table 3: Nature of complaints against government agencies

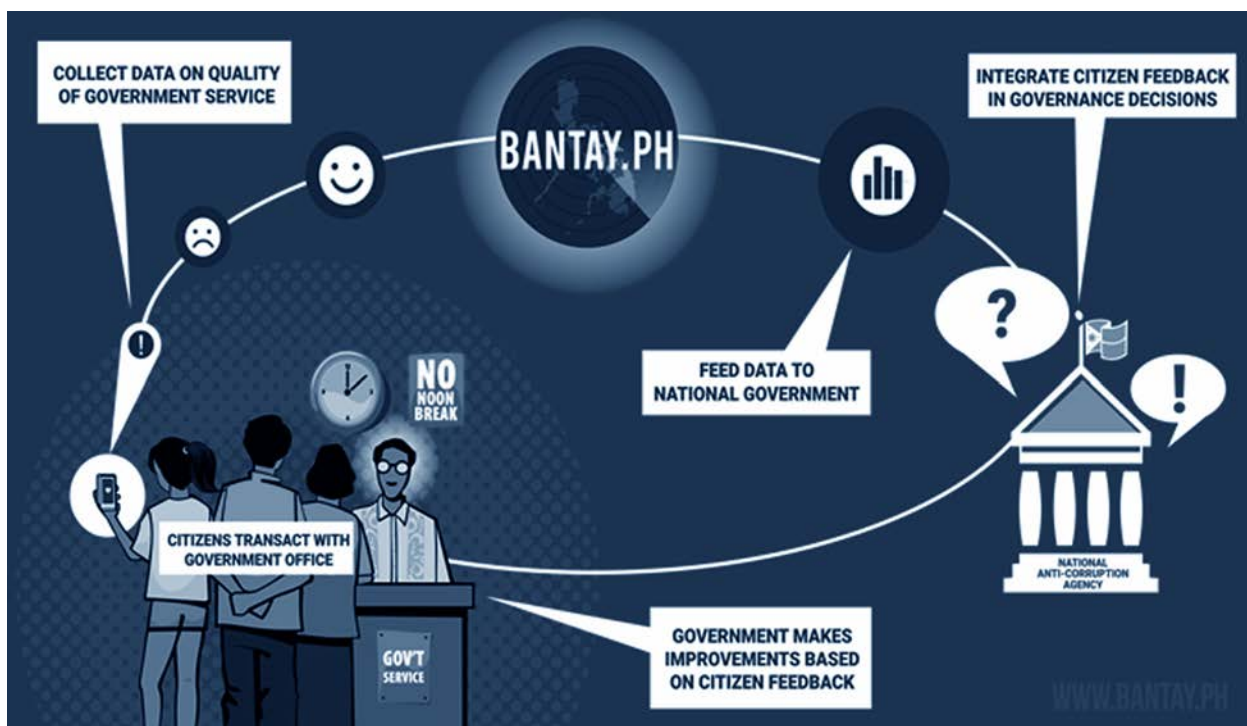
Nature of Complaint	Year			Total	Rank
	2013	2014	2015		
Absence of easy-to-read identification of frontliner		6	10	16	
Bribery and extortion		13	80	93	
Discourtesy	241	261	502	1004	2
Failure to act on request	54	95	117	266	6
Failure to attend to clients during office hours	141	131	379	651	4
Fixing activities	138	142	276	556	5
Imposition of additional cost	63	64	113	240	7
Imposition of additional requirements		14	10	24	
No citizen's charter		10	55	65	
Non-observance of noon break rule	249	217	513	979	3
No Public Assistance and Complaints Desks		16	33	49	
No special lane for senior citizens, pregnant women and PWDs	46	32	87	165	10
Non-issuance of official receipt		28	64	92	
Non-observance of queuing system		31	108	139	
Poor facility		37	155	192	9
Slow processing	789	554	1086	2429	1
Unattended hotline number	41	30	56	127	
Unclear procedure/s	56	64	105	225	8

Source: Contact Center ng Bayan

government to a higher standard and make them accountable. On the practical aspect, Bantay.PH also aims to empower citizens to better engage government by teaching them how to avail of government services without having to pay a bribe or using a fixer.

The monitoring work is primarily done by trained student-volunteers and results are immediately published online in their

website (www.bantay.ph) and submitted to the CSC. The monitoring design is loosely based on the RCS, but focuses more on the citizen experience, instead of mere basic compliance. Done in order to complement the efforts of the CSC, Bantay.PH chose to examine offices that have not yet been monitored by the RCS, with the deputized student-volunteers getting special permits from the CSC to anonymously visit the city halls.



For its initial effort, Bantay.PH's pilot study looked at business permit processing in the 16 cities of Metro Manila. As previously noted, data from the initiative's monitoring efforts were consolidated and published in www.bantay.ph, and will be featured in a latter section of this report.

IMPROVING THE BUREAUCRACY TO IMPROVE THE EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

Focusing on the business permits and licensing divisions of Metro Manila cities serves a practical purpose both on the micro and macro levels. Micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), in particular, stand to gain much from improved service delivery, since they have relatively limited capital to absorb the high costs of unnecessary transactions when starting a business, let alone, pay bribes.

Assisting MSMEs to easily establish their businesses will greatly impact government efforts in the broader goal of higher economic

Business Registration Guide:

Following are the government agencies that a start-up business needs to register with:

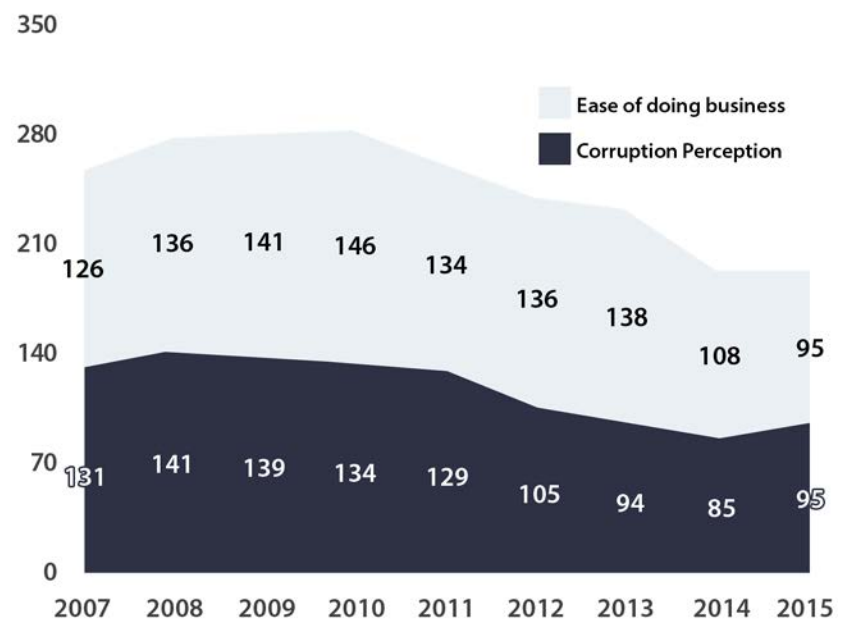
AGENCY	WHAT
Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)	This is where you register if your enterprise is a single proprietorship. The agency will issue a certificate of registration of business name.
Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)	If your enterprise is a partnership or a corporation, this is where you will register. It will issue a certificate of registration.
Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)	If your set-up is a cooperative, register with this body. The agency will issue the certificate of registration.
Local Government Unit (LGU)	You register with the municipality or city where you will set up your business. This office will issue the business permit.
Barangay Hall	You register with the specific barangay in the municipality or city where you will operate your business. This office will issue the barangay clearance.
Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR)	You register your business with this office and apply for your business's taxpayer identification number (TIN), registration of books of accounts, authority to print
Social Security System (SSS)	You register your business as an employer, yourself as a self-employed or as employee, and your workers as employees. This office will issue an SSS number for your business, for yourself, as well as for your workers.
Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)	If you employ five workers or more, register your business with this agency. The DOLE is asked to promote gainful employment opportunities, protect workers and promote their welfare, develop human resources, and maintain industrial peace.
Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF)	RA 7742 requires all SSS members earning at least P4,000 a month to register with this agency. HDMF administers the Pag-Ibig Fund.

Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth)	The New National Health Insurance Act (RA 7875) as amended by RA 9241 requires all employers of the government and private sectors and their employees to register with this agency. PhilHealth manages and administers the government health care system.
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growth and better employment generation—put simply, inclusive growth. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), for instance, reported that as of 2012, of the 944,897 businesses registered, 99.58% of these are MSMEs with a significant number of them found in the National Capital Region (NCR). According to the DTI, NCR has 210,576 business establishments who fall under the MSME category. Worth noting as well is that the number of persons employed by these firms have grown by 45.7% from 2.7 million in 1995 to 3.9 million in 2011 (Melchor and Mendoza, 2014).

Key institutions—such as the World Economic Forum (WEF), Transparency International (TI), and the National Competitiveness Council Philippines (NCC)—have, likewise, recognized improving the ease of doing business in the Philippines as a pivot point to enhance national competitiveness (NCC, 2015). In short, a better bureaucracy with

Figure 2: Ease of Doing Business Rank and Corruption Perception Index since the implementation of the Anti-Red tape Act



Source: Transparency International and World Bank
 Note: There are discrepancies in the published materials of the World Bank due to changes in their methodology. For consistency, we followed the rankings in the full PDF report of their website.

lesser red tape results to a better business environment and greater investments, and generates higher levels of employment and economic growth

It must be noted that after the enactment of ARTA, public service delivery duration has improved—from an average processing time of 47 days for

Table 4: Success indicators of streamlining Business Permits and Licensing, particularly for starting a business

STARTING A BUSINESS	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1.1. Procedures (number)	17	17	17	18	17	16	16	16	16
1.2. Time (days)	47	47	41	42	37	36	36	36	34
1.3. Cost (% of income per capita)	22.2	24.1	22.7	21.6	22.1	19.1	19.2	18.7	16.6
1.4. Pain-in minimum capital (% of income per capita)	1.8	6.9	6	5.5	6	5.2	4.8	4.6	3.6

Table n. Success Indicators of Streamlining Business Permits and Licensing, particularly for processes in starting a business
 Source: World Bank - IFC

Table 5: Success indicators of streamlining Business Permits and Licensing in a sample LGU

TANGIBLE CHANGES AFTER STREAMLINING BPLS	2008	2009	2010	2011
Processing Time (in hours)	48	32	2.25	2
Number of steps	10	6	4	4
Number of forms	4	1	1	1
Number of signatures	4	3	3	3
Estimated Bureaucratic Costs* (in USD; rates in 2013)	18.3	8.33	4.16	4.16

Note: Bureaucratic Cost is computed as [(time in days x minimum wage) + (transportation + photocopying application form fee (if any) + food)]
 Source: Civil Service Commission

starting a business, it is now at an average of 34 days (Table 4). The improvement seen in 2011 is partly because of the mandate of local government units to create one-stop shops for business registration.

Data from a CSC study (Table 5) similarly showed considerable improvement in permit processing times in a sample local government unit, from 48 hours in 2008 down to 2 hours in 2011. A decrease in the number of steps, number of forms, and number of signatures required to register a new business also resulted in less bureaucratic costs for the applicant.

Other than the streamlining of steps and procedures, the overall quality and efficiency of public service can be further

measured through the other indicators pointed out in the ARTA's provisions. These include, but are not limited to: state of facilities, helpfulness of officers, turnaround time of application, feedback mechanisms, quality of information, and the presence of bribery and fixing activities. Bantay.PH, as an independent citizen group, seeks out and monitors these indicators on a regular basis to help strengthen the implementation of the ARTA and, ultimately, improve public service delivery by identifying specific action points for the local governments that the student-volunteers visit.

Regarding the performance of Metro Manila cities, on-the-ground data gathered by Bantay.PH through its monitoring work is seen in Table 6. The

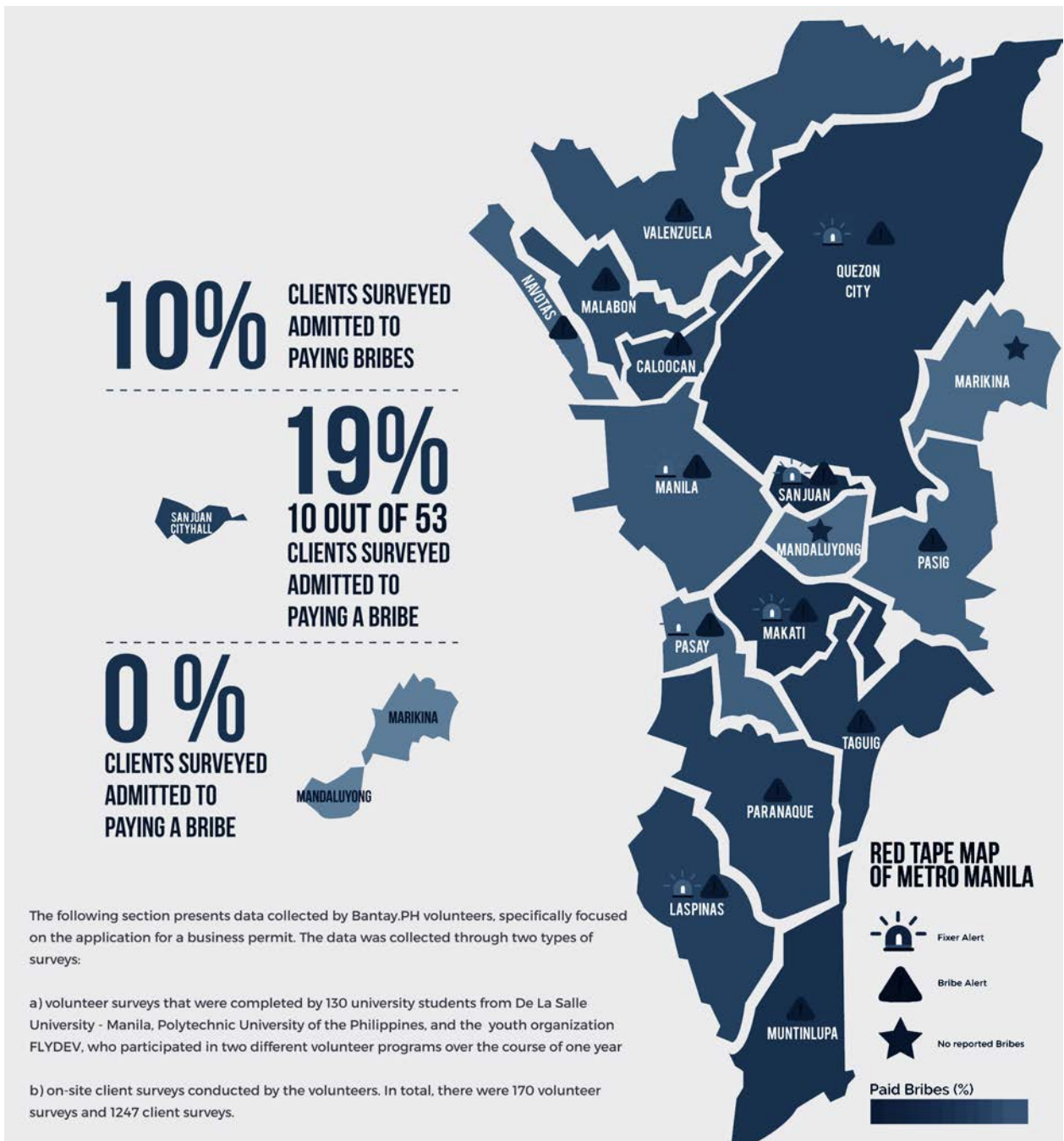
information is preliminary and the findings are partially based on the data collection activities conducted from 2014-2015.

From the client surveys (people who were transacting that were surveyed) of the different Business Permit and Licensing Offices (BPLO) of the 16 cities of Metro Manila, the cities of Marikina, Taguig, and Parañaque have the highest overall scores for indicators such as: clarity and understandability of the Citizen's Charter (Transparency), justifiable processing time, absence of bribery, efficient layout (Process Flow), and courtesy and helpfulness of frontline service providers (Officers). For information, Taguig City Hall was also given an "Excellent" score in the CSC Report Card Survey

Table 6: Bantay.PH scorecard per ARTA Category

	CALOOCAN	LAS PINAS	MANDALUYONG	MAKATI	MALABON	MANILA	MARIKINA	MUNTINLUPA	NAVOTAS	PARAÑAQUE	PASIG	PASAY	QUEZON CITY	SAN JUAN	TAGUIG	VALENZUELA
GROWTH IN NUMBER OF REGISTERED BUSINESSES	2.60%	1404.18%	1.65%	4.12%	0.86%	85.35%	6.12%	2.86%	3101.55%	30.65%	13.20%	731.21%	8.74%	14.9% (2014)	22.83%	6.42%
TOTAL NUMBER OF NEW BUSINESS REGISTRATIONS	561	380	867	1,004	295	2,072	1,122	765	6,160	636	1,130	1,040	2,946	1,712	1,002	1,005
POPULATION	1,489,040	552,573	328,699	529,039	353,337	1,652,171	424,150	459,941	249,131	588,126	669,773	392,869	2,761,720	121,430	644,473	573,356
CLIENT SURVEY AVERAGE	19.23	17.87	21.39	16.97	20.9	16.78	23.07	19.4	19.77	22.87	15.03	20.56	18.21	20.16	21.73	18.5
TRANSPARENCY	9.23	7.87	10.67	9.06	10.53	7.44	12.37	8.4	9.5	1.8	6.8	10.41	9.33	9.6	11.29	7.63
PROCESS FLOW	2.97	3	3.64	2.78	3.3	2.78	3.93	3.23	3.27	3.3	3.07	3.31	2.33	3	3.06	3.53
OFFICERS	6.87	6.77	7.08	5.03	6.8	6.48	6.77	7.27	6.93	7.43	5.17	6.82	6.26	7.08	7.04	7.13

Note: Total of 1,274 responded to the client survey
Source: Bantay.PH



in 2015, the only LGU in Metro Manila to garner such a rating.

Conversely, Pasig City featured the lowest score on Transparency; Quezon City scored the lowest in Process Flow; while Makati City fared poorly in indicators covering Officers. These measures can help address common complaints like slow processes, unclear procedures, discourtesy and fixing activities.

Note that the entire business process is not limited to the BPLO. Offices such as the Engineering Department, Health and Sanitation Department, Planning and Development Office, Office of the Building Official, Treasury, and the Fire Department, are all part of the process as well.

To illustrate, aspiring business owners will have to transact with as many as 10 different

government offices in just the business registration stage. (See sidebar on page 7) This does not count special permits or other documents that need to be acquired depending on the nature of the business to be registered.

The results of Bantay.PH's data collection activities, as well as the results of CSC's own study show that the ARTA, and the projects of the NCC, local gov-

ernments, and pertinent agencies to gauge and improve competitiveness at the grassroots level are notable steps and that progress has been made. However, much work remains to be done in order for service delivery improvement efforts to be felt by MSMEs.

MOVING BEYOND COMPLIANCE, IMPROVING THE CITIZEN EXPERIENCE

Since the implementation of the ARTA, the CSC has pushed for citizen-based monitoring of government offices to create awareness about the ARTA and to empower citizens to give feedback to the government. However, while ARTA was enacted in 2007, awareness of the law and its provisions remain quite low. This finding and its implications can be cited as action points to help improve implementation. Alongside the efforts of the CSC, Bantay.PH answers the call by continuously pushing for higher awareness of the ARTA through its civic education activities and the use of technology.

Working under the premise that people will demand proper service if they know what their rights are or what the standard is as stipulated by the law, awareness becomes practical information that can help citizens demand good governance. The critical point of convergence for both the pertinent government agencies and the service end-users is that there is a need to move beyond mere compliance with the ARTA and adhere to the core of the law: inform and empower the citizens, and improve their service experience.

Under this premise, Bantay.PH brought together representatives from the different Metro Manila LGUs in September 2015 to un-

derstand how the ARTA applies in daily office operations. The knowledge sharing event entitled Governance Dialogues was an opportunity for Bantay.PH to hear from the people implementing the law and provided a venue for city administrators to share best practices and learn from each other.

The following points below emphasize possible areas for improvement that may be implemented by government to further enhance citizen experience:

MORE EFFECTIVE INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Information dissemination is a crucial point in ensuring that citizens are well informed about their basic rights to quality public service delivery.

Bantay.PH's study from 2014 to 2015 showed that out of 1,274 clients, only 322 respondents (15.27%) were aware of what a Citizen's Charter was. Moreover, based on the study, only 77% of the 322 clients who were aware of what a Citizen's Charter was could understand what was published.

A more extensive information dissemination campaign, not only of the Citizen's Charter and of other provisions of the Anti-Red Tape Act, but also of business-related government services, will ensure that more citizens will be made aware of their basic rights to quality public service delivery. The Navotas City Hall, as an example, conducts barangay information drives to deliver information to areas outside of the city hall and ensure that citizens are made aware of current city hall initiatives, the ARTA provisions, and city hall feedback lines.

OPEN FEEDBACK LINES FROM CITIZENS TO GOVERNMENT

Information dissemination should also include feedback lines citizens can report to. These feedback lines can work two ways—one, the government can easily consolidate reports and gain first-hand feedback from clients, ensuring that the data they gather is relevant to its direct end-users; two, citizens can be empowered to know that there is a government line they can report to in case they would like to submit a feedback report on the performance of a particular government service.

It is also important that administrators act on the feedback given to them, since top performing cities claim that they check feedback on a daily basis and make sure they act on urgent concerns immediately. Any report of fixers spotted, for example, are investigated, with involved parties within the bureaucracy fired on the spot if found guilty.

BETTER COORDINATION WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Citizens are not the only ones that bear the brunt of the bureaucracy. Government employees themselves also have to deal with the internal red tape that is brought about by coordinating and transacting with other government offices in the national level.

Illustrating the disconnect between government branches, one city administrator shared: "We are ready to innovate in the local level, but sometimes national government is not ready." For example, online and electronic payment schemes have to be closely coordinated with the Commission on Audit and sometimes the technology, budget, or skills required

to absorb new means are not available. In addition, certain added documents and requirements are not really imposed by the local offices but by national agencies. It is essential that all these offices review the requirements to avoid redundancies that add costs to the citizens.

IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF POLICY ACTION POINTS

The consultation also showed that government employees are inclined to be more concerned about compliance to internal policy, because it is given heavier weight in performance evaluation. Ensuring that a client has access to efficient public service delivery is thereby put as a second thought.

A mandate of the ARTA, for example, requires city halls to post their Citizen's Charters, and all other related process flows, on tarpaulins (with pre-determined dimensions), regardless of the office space, and the amount of information to be printed on a single tarpaulin. City hall representatives voiced concern about the outdated mandate of having

to use a tarpaulin, rather than being allowed to innovate and use new materials to relay information to clients.

In order to improve and standardize processes in business registration, a policy review is recommended, in the context of ensuring that public service delivery is rooted from the point of view of the customer experience, rather than the internal compliance rating of a government office.

An in-depth policy review ensures the mandated action points are still relevant, that best practices are documented, especially if these can be replicated in other offices, and that the problems and challenges recorded during the implementation and monitoring are properly addressed.

CONCLUSION

At the launch of the 2015 Report Card Survey results at the University of the Philippines on January 2016, newly appointed CSC Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala said that the results of the recent RCS can be seen both as an achievement and a challenge:

"As the survey revealed, having majority of frontline service offices rated as 'good' by the public is a sign that the government is already reaping the benefits of vigorously implementing the ARTA and of raising the public's consciousness on their rights and responsibilities as consumers of government services. However, we should strive to further improve the ratings instead of merely settling for 'good.' The CSC will continuously work with government agencies so that all Filipinos can get the quality of service they deserve."

The ARTA has paved the way for government offices to start implementing standards in order to improve public service delivery, but the citizenry also has an important role to play. Governance is a shared responsibility, and citizens should be made aware that they can also be a part of the solution in curbing corruption, eradicating red tape, and improving public service delivery by engaging with the government responsibly, giving constructive feedback, and knowing their rights. ■

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