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## The Laguna De Bay Institutional Strengthening and Community Participation (Liscop) Project

**Joey Cariño**

*Laguna Lake Development Authority  
Calauan, Laguna*

Within the context of the socio-economic significance of the Laguna de Bay and its increasing environmental deterioration, the Laguna de Bay Institutional Strengthening and Community Participation Project (LISCOP) is being implemented through a loan from the World Bank and grant from the Netherlands Government. A five-year development initiative (2004-2009), the LISCOP is designed to support co-managed investments that will benefit 66 Local Government Units in the watershed and support the institutional strengthening of the LLDA, LGUs and River Councils in ensuring the sustained and effective management of the Laguna de Bay.

The LISCOP specifically aims at improving the environmental quality of the Lake through direct micro-watershed interventions and ensuring effective development governance necessary to meet the demands for a more integrated resource management to safeguard the Lake's ecological integrity.

To support the strategic orientation of the LISCOP, two major interventions, which also form LISCOP's critical components, will be implemented. These are:

Component 1: Co-managed Investments for Watershed Development - will support on-lending to multiple LGU borrowers to implement micro-watershed environmental sub-projects. The demand driven, open menu of environmental interventions (sub-projects) that may be implemented broadly fall under the following general themes, Waste Management and Sanitation; Forestry, Inland Waters and Biodiversity (Natural Resource Management) sub-projects; Eco-tourism; Soil Erosion and Localized Flood Prevention.

Component 2: Strengthening Institutions and Instruments. This consists of capability enhancement support to the LLDA, LGUs River Councils and community groups. The enhancement of the institutional capability of the LLDA, to be carried out along three major activities, is expected to result

in the improvement of the delivery of its policy-making, regulatory and developmental mandate. These activities include: Improving Regulatory Instruments and Approaches; Strengthening Policy and Planning; Formulating a Strategy for Trunk Infrastructure.

### **The Project Area**

The developmental, institutional and direct micro-watershed interventions are to be implemented within the Laguna de Bay region, which is the largest inland water body in the Philippines and one of the largest lakes in Southeast Asia. While the Lake and its watershed accounts for only 1.3% of the country's total land area, it covers the provinces of Rizal and Laguna and portions of the provinces of Cavite, Batangas and Quezon and Metro Manila. It is host to a total of 66 local government units (51 municipalities, 10 cities and 5 provinces) and is home to approximately 10 million people.

The lake supports a host of beneficial uses including fisheries and it is currently being eyed as a major source of drinking water for Metro Manila in the immediate future. Over the recent decades however, uncontrolled population growth, indiscriminate deforestation and land conversion, intense fisheries, widespread industrialization and urban sprawl have produced massive changes in the Laguna de Bay and its watershed. The resulting problems relate to solid waste management, sanitation and public health, congestion, rapid siltation, unmitigated input of domestic, agricultural and industrial wastes, deteriorating water quality, flowing problems and loss of biodiversity.

### **The Micro-Watershed Approach**

Environmental action planning and sub-project implementation adopts the micro-watershed or the sub-basin approach. As the basic planning framework for LISCOP interventions, the micro-watersheds allows for a holistic appreciation of the interplay of natural and man made processes within that given ecological space.

The LLDA has delineated 24 micro-watersheds within the larger Laguna de Bay Basin. As a strategy for optimizing sub-project level interventions to the lake and its watershed, the LISCOP provides the framework of cooperation that will enable multiple LGUs to jointly implement sub-projects cutting across system boundaries. The multiple LGU borrowing framework to be adopted under Component 1 of the LISCOP is considered one of the strategies to actualize LISCOP's participatory governance for a micro-watershed approach to improving the quality of the Laguna de Bay and its watershed, where two or even more LGUs, depending on the natural configuration of a given micro-watershed, can act as one sub-project sponsor and become jointly responsible for the implementation of sub-projects on the ground.