

Building the Technical Expertise of LGUs for the Robust Implementation of Ridge to Reef Approach/Watershed Ecosystem Approach to Local and Provincial Land Use and Development Planning in the Philippines

Activity Report/Completion Report

1. Activity Title

Visioning Workshop for the Province of La Union

2. Duration and Date:

The activity was conducted for one (1) day, on May 07, 2024

3. Venue:

The activity was conducted at J&V Hotel and Resort, San Fernando City, La Union

4. Content and Methodology

The Visioning Workshop for the province of La Union was funded by the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) and implemented by the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in partnership with the Provincial Government of La Union (PGLU). This activity primarily aims to provide a long-term view of the province, reflecting the aspirations of its leadership and citizens, and which will serve as an overall inspirational guide for the rest of the Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan (PDPPF). Furthermore, it aims to solicit inputs from constituents regarding the perceived problems, issues, opportunities, and other plan directions.

The APN project staff from the UPLB led the activity through panel discussions together with the Provincial Development Council (PDC), Local Government Units (LGUs) representatives, and other relevant stakeholders in the province, including the Governor. There were three major activities in the visioning workshop, such as the vision-reality gap, problem identification from different sectors, and formulation of a vision for the province of La Union.

The activity program flow is as follows:

Table 1. Program Flow of the Visioning Workshop for the Province of La Union

Time	Activity	Personnel-in-Charge
7:00 AM	Registration	APN Staff and PGLU Officer
8:00 AM	Invocation National Anthem	AVP from PGLU

8:05 AM	Opening Remarks	Michaela Louise T. Delfinado, EnP PPDC, PGLU
8:10 AM	Acknowledgment of the Participants	Moderator
8:20 AM	Lecture on the Ridge to Reef / Watershed Ecosystem Management Approach and Brief Discussion of the Watersheds within La Union	Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz Project Leader, APN
9:20 AM	Coffee Break/Photo Opportunity	
9:30 AM	Workshop Proper: Current State Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Problem Identification ● Participants' perspectives and insight sharing 	For. Marinelle R. Agonia Project Staff, APN
12:00 PM	Lunch Break	
1:00 PM	Vision Formulation	For. Marinelle R. Agonia Project Staff, APN
4:30 PM	Highlights of the Workshop and Ways Forward	
4:45 PM	Closing Remarks	Hon. Raphaelle Veronica "Rafy" Ortega-David Governor, Province of La Union

Lecture on Ridge to Reef/Watershed Ecosystem Management Approach and Brief Discussion of the Watersheds within La Union

Before the lecture on the ridge to reef/watershed ecosystem management (R2R/WEM), a leveling-off of the knowledge of the participants on the topic was conducted led by For. Marinelle R. Agonia. Mentimeter, an online, interactive presentation tool was utilized in the pre-lecture leveling-off to engage the audience and gather real-time feedback on ten (10) questions revolving around the topic. The pre-lecture leveling-off demonstrated that the participants have a good understanding of the critical role of land use in watershed health and the negative consequences of mismanagement. They are cognizant of the importance of effective land use planning and the need for strong and consistent enforcement of related laws and regulations. In addition, they have shown their awareness of the interconnectedness of land use issues and their impact on both ecosystems and human activities.

The lecture delivered by Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz explained the importance of not only including watershed protection as part of land use and development planning but to use watershed as the planning platform of national government agencies (NGAs) and

LGUs. Dr. Cruz emphasized the need to utilize the R2R/WEM to develop plans and programs to achieve socioeconomic development targets without damaging the resilience of watersheds and their ecosystems. The lecture also delved into the key features of the R2R approach such as the integrated analysis of interconnected problems, integrated and harmonized sectoral development planning and implementation, resolution of conflict, and pursuit of cooperation and collaboration among LGUs. Lastly, Dr. Cruz shared how the R2R/WEM approach is adopted into the formulation and/or updating of the PDPFP, Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs), and other prescribed sectoral plans of LGUs.

Activity 1. Vision-Reality Gap

During the activity, participants evaluated the province's progress toward its vision in four (4) key areas: environment, economy, social/institutional, and disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM)/infrastructure. The La Union Transformative Governance Road Map (Figure 1) envisioning La Union as “The Heart of Agri-Tourism in Northern Luzon by 2025” shows the vision elements across the key areas:

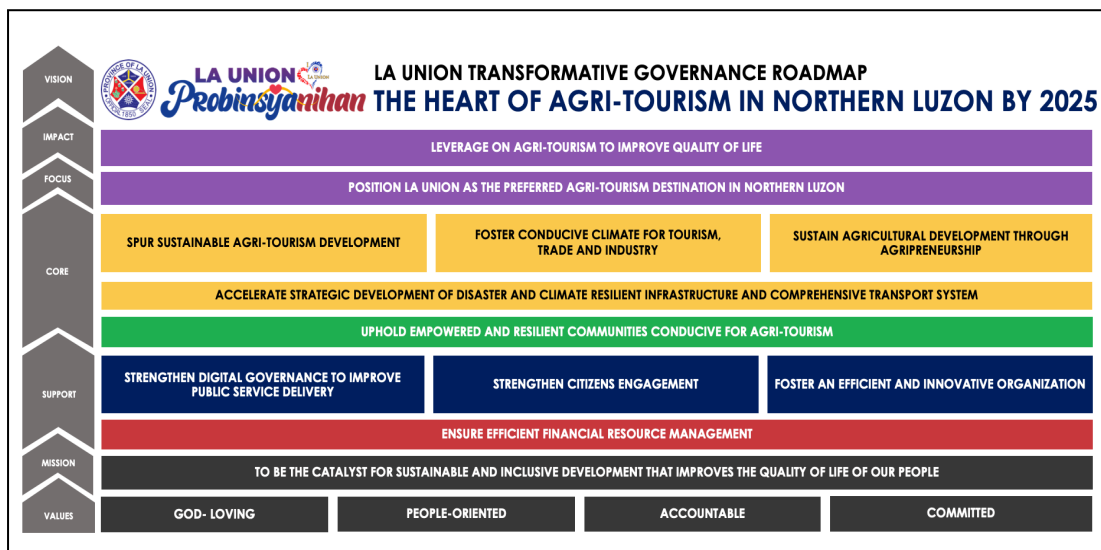


Figure 1. La Union Transformative Governance Roadmap

For each vision element, the participants were asked to identify success indicators that would help track the progress or identify areas for improvement in achieving the current vision of the province. A one-to-four scale was used to rate the success indicators, where one (1) indicated strong disagreement, two (2) denoted disagreement, three (3) indicated agreement, and four (4) denoted strong agreement. The core components of the province's current vision were presented for each theme.

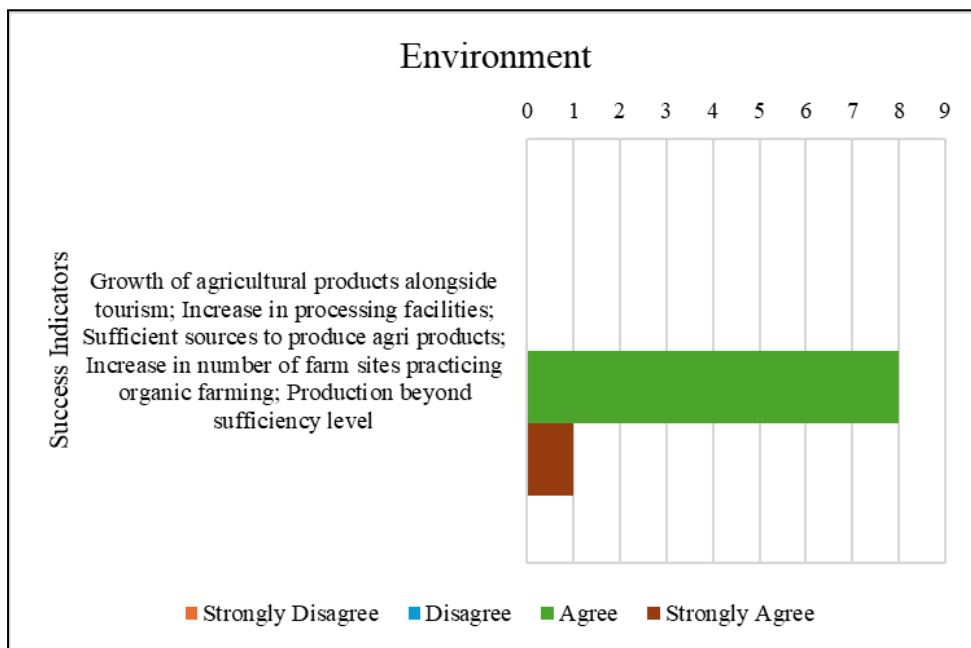


Figure 2. Rating for the success indicators under the Environment theme

The vision element identified for the Environment theme was *'Uphold an Empowered and Resilient Environment Conducive to Agri-Tourism.'* While the participants enumerated five (5) success indicators, the ratings for these indicators were lumped together, focusing on the growth of agricultural products alongside tourism (Figure 2). For this, many participants agreed that the province is on the right track in terms of achieving this particular vision element.

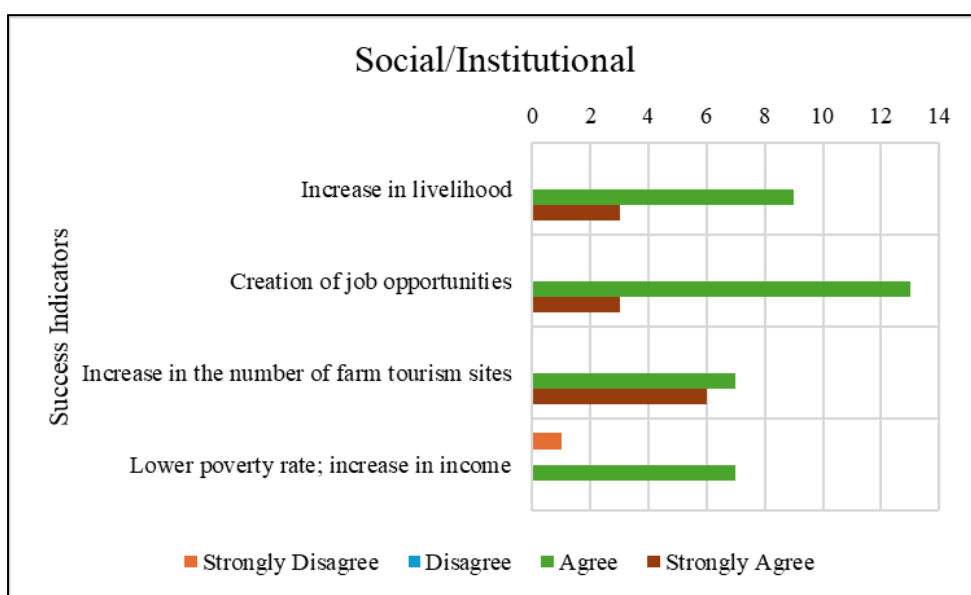


Figure 3. Rating for the success indicators under the Social/Institutional theme

Under the Social/Institutional theme, the identified vision element was *'Leverage on Agri-Tourism to Improve Quality of Life.'* Four (4) success indicators were identified by the participants: 1) increase in livelihood, 2) creation of job opportunities, 3) increase in the number of farm tourism sites, and 4) lower poverty rate (Figure 3). The number of votes indicates general agreement among the participants that the La Union province meets these targets. However, in terms of the poverty rate, one of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement that the poverty rate in the province has decreased. The latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) in 2021 shows that generally, there was a nationwide increase in poverty rate due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

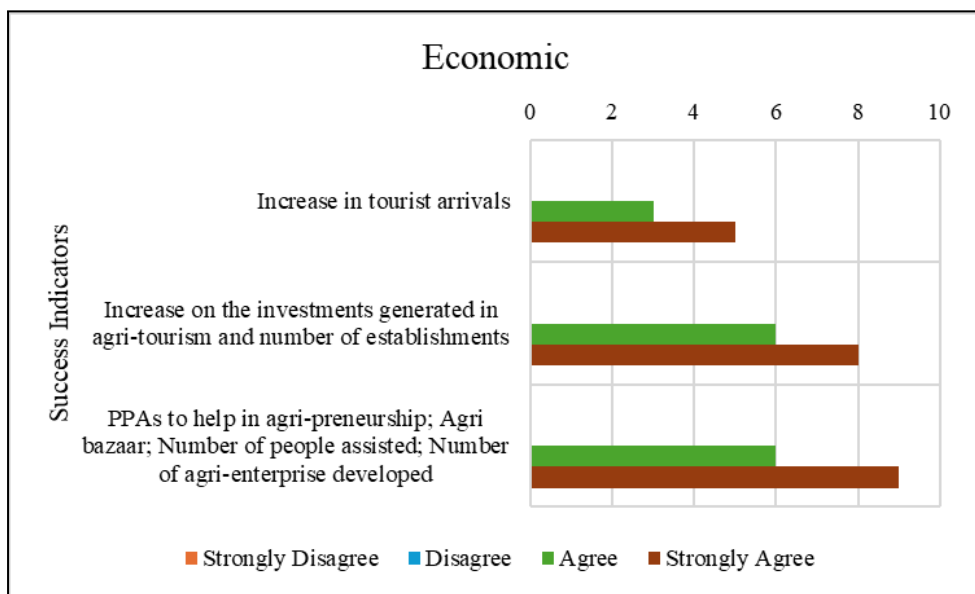


Figure 4. Rating for the success indicators under the Economic theme

Three (3) vision elements were identified for the Economic theme (Figure 4). For each vision element, ratings were given for the corresponding success indicators. The first vision element *'Spur Sustainable Agri-Tourism Development,'* the success indicator was the increase in tourist arrivals. Second, in *'Foster Conducive Climate for Tourism, Trade, and Industry,'* the increase in the investments generated in agri-tourism and the number of establishments was suggested. Lastly, the third vision element was to *'Sustain Agricultural Development through Agri-preneurship.'* The success indicators for this were the programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) to help in agri-preneurship, the presence of agri bazaars, the number of people assisted, and the number of agri enterprises developed. In general, the participants strongly agree that there has been considerable progress in meeting the economic targets in the province.

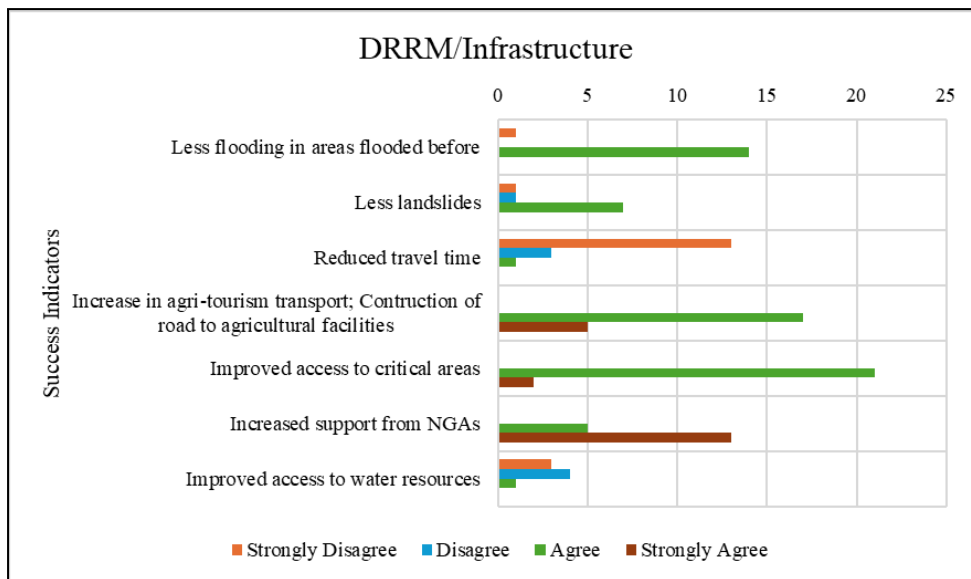


Figure 5. Rating for the success indicators under the DRRM/Infrastructure theme

Under the DRRM/Infrastructure theme, seven (7) success indicators were enumerated by the participants for the vision element, *'Accelerate Strategic Development of Disaster and Climate Resilient Infrastructure and Comprehensive Transport System'* (Figure 5). In terms of flooding and landslides, the majority of the participants agree that there have been fewer occurrences of these hazards. Regarding agri-tourism transport, access to critical areas, and support from NGAs, some agree while others strongly agree that significant improvements have been observed. On the other hand, there was a general disagreement that reduced travel time and improved access to water resources have been met, making them areas for improvement in achieving the vision element.

Activity 2. Problem Identification

The activity on problem identification aims to determine the factors and challenges that hinder the attainment of success in fulfilling the vision of the province of La Union. For this activity, the participants were grouped into five groups (Table 2) based on the geographical location of their municipalities and the 18 watersheds that within or partially within their jurisdiction. The extent of the watershed area within the boundaries of the municipalities was the main consideration for the groupings.

Table 2. Grouping of participants for the problem identification activity.

Group	Watersheds	Municipalities
1	Bayogao River Watershed, Busilac River Watershed, Darigayos River Watershed	Balaoan, Bangar, Luna, Santol, Sudipen
2	Baroro River Watershed, Gantay River Watershed, Maragayap River Watershed, Talagtag Watershed	Bacnotan, San Gabriel, San Juan
3	Bauang River Watershed, Carmay Watershed, Tanqui Watershed	Bagulin, Bauang, Burgos, Naguilian, San Fernando
4	Aringay River Watershed, Caba River Watershed, Dulao Watershed	Aringay, Caba, Pugo, Tubao
5	Bued River Watershed, Cupang River Watershed, Gumot Watershed, Pidig Watershed, Santo Tomas Town Watershed	Agoo, Rosario, Sto. Tomas

The problems across five (5) different thematic areas (Environment, Social, Economic, DRRM/Infrastructure, and Institutional) were identified and enumerated by the participants. Afterwards, the problems were arranged based on what the participants perceive to be the most pressing to the least ones. This led to the creation of the problem tree for each thematic area, consisting of a core problem, its primary and secondary causes, and its primary and secondary effects.

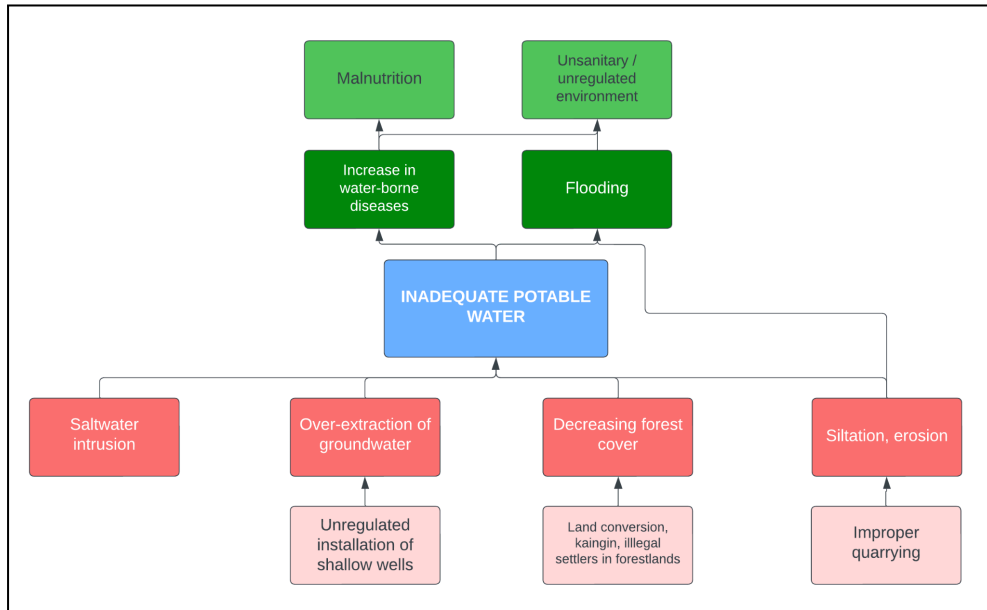


Figure 6. Problem tree for the Environment theme

Under the Environment theme (Figure 6), the problem of inadequate potable water was recognized as the core problem. According to the participants, improper land uses such as quarrying, land conversion, kaingin, and illegal settlers in forestlands exacerbate the problem of decreasing forest cover and siltation/erosion. Moreover, the unregulated installation of shallow wells contributes to depleting groundwater. The consequence of inadequate potable water is the increase in water-borne diseases, which directly lead to malnutrition. Flooding is a direct consequence of siltation/erosion, but the insufficiency of clean water also compromises the sanitation and/or regulation of the environment.

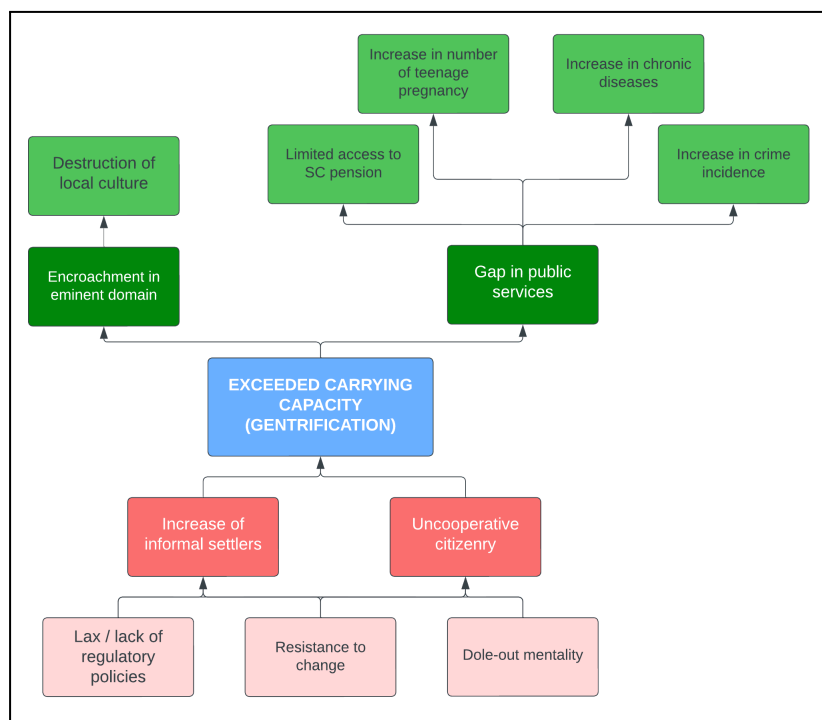


Figure 7. Problem tree for the Social theme

According to the participants, exceeded carrying capacity was pinpointed as the core problem for the Social theme (Figure 7). It was explained that this was the result of an increase in informal settlers and uncooperative citizenry. These arise from lax implementation of regulatory policies, coupled with resistance to change and dole-out mentality among residents (dependency on government assistance). Gap in public services and encroachment in eminent domain were some of the significant impacts of the exceeding carrying capacity of the province. These contribute to an environment that breeds social problems such as limited access to senior citizens' (SC) pension, an increase in the number of teenage pregnancies, an increase in chronic diseases, an increase in crime incidence, and the destruction of local culture.

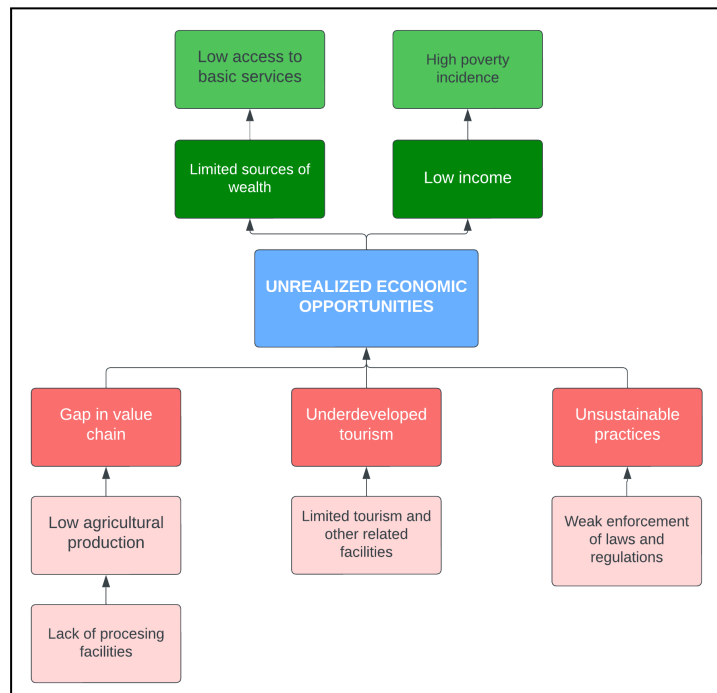


Figure 8. Problem tree for the Economic theme

The problem tree for the Economic theme presents unrealized economic opportunities as its core problem (Figure 8). The gap in the value chain in agriculture, underdeveloped tourism, and unsustainable practices make it challenging for the province to capitalize on its economic potential fully. These are caused by lack of processing facilities, low agricultural production, limited tourism and other related facilities, and weak enforcement of laws and regulations. As a consequence, the core problem leads to limited sources of wealth and low income, which further results in low access to basic services and high poverty incidence.

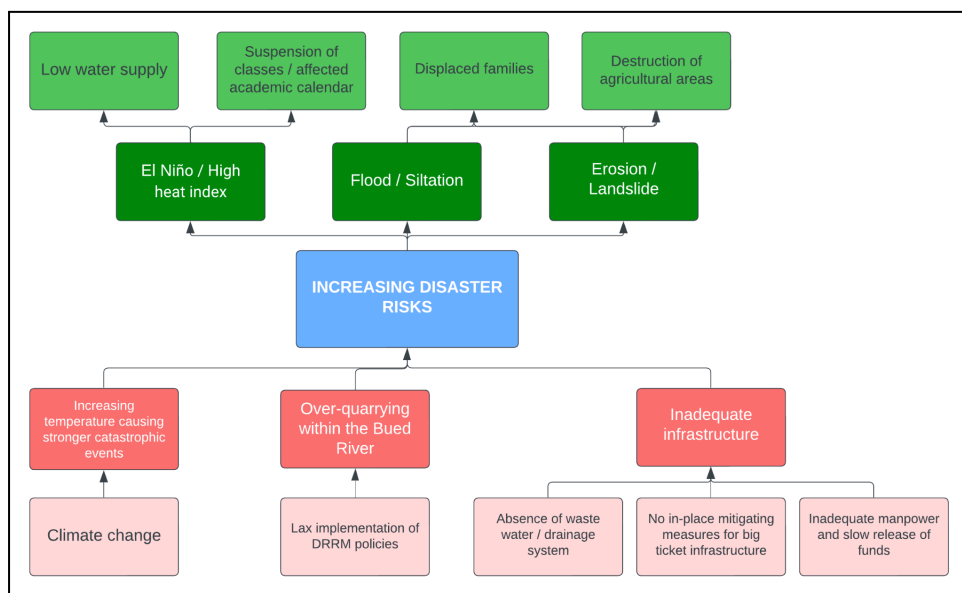


Figure 9. Problem tree for the DRRM/Infrastructure theme

Under the DRRM/Infrastructure theme, the participants specified the increasing disaster risks as the core problem (Figure 9). This is brought about by the increasing temperature due to climate change, overquarrying within the river system, and inadequate infrastructure to improve DRRM in the province. El Niño/high heat index, flood/siltation, and erosion/landslide are the direct causes of the core problem. Such effects further lead to low water supply, suspension of classes/affected academic calendar, displacement of families, and destruction of agricultural areas.

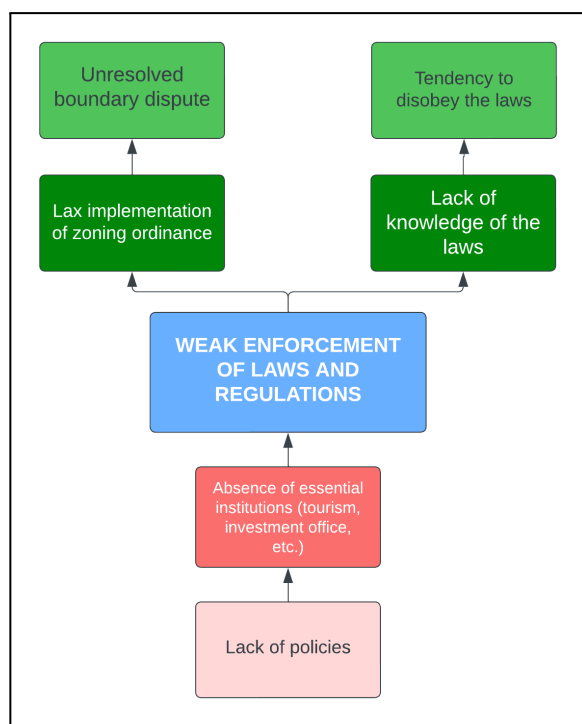


Figure 10. Problem tree for the Institutional theme

Weak enforcement of laws and regulations was indicated as the core problem of the problem tree for the Institutional theme (Figure 10). The participants stated that the absence of essential institutions, stemming from the lack of policies, directly contribute to the core problem. This directly results in the lax implementation of zoning ordinance and lack of knowledge of the laws. Furthermore, the secondary effects of such are the unresolved boundary dispute and tendency to disobey laws.

Activity 3. Vision Formulation

The primary objective of this activity is to develop a long-term, holistic vision for the province that resonates with the aspirations of its leadership and citizenry. This shared vision will serve as the foundational blueprint for the entire PDPFP. Through collaborative discussions, each group identified key vision components for specific thematic areas, culminating in a unified vision statement that fully encompasses the identified vision elements. Table 3 presents the suggested keywords to be reflected in the Vision for 2055.

Table 3. Keywords for the 2055 Vision statement per theme

Theme	Vision for 2055 (keywords)
Environment	Greener, Rehabilitated forestlands, Sufficient potable water, Increased forest cover
Social	Inclusive, Responsive
Institutional	Empowered
Economic	Vibrant, Progressive, Sustainable
DRRM/Infrastructure	Adaptive, Resiliency, Better quality of life, Mitigation

Based on the keywords above, each group of participants constructed their draft vision statements as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Draft Vision statements of each group for 2055

Group	Vision Statements
1	By 2055, La Union as the ecotourism center of Northern Luzon empowered by responsive citizenry and unified leaders in a greener environment.
2	By 2055, La Union to be the Haven of Ecotourism in Northern Luzon
3	The Premier Ecotourism Destination of the North by 2055.

4	The Heart of Ecotourism in the North by 2055 empowered and resilient citizenry.
5	By 2055, La Union will be a progressive and sustainable ecotourism destination, steered by empowered and inclusive community equipped with disaster-resilient, infrastructure and a greener La Union.

Under the guidance of the Provincial Governor - Hon. Raphaelle Veronica “Rafy” Ortega-David, the participants have also expressed their aspirations for the province. In general, the draft vision statements of each group reflect their desire to transform the province of La Union from being ‘*The Heart of Agri-Tourism in Northern Luzon by 2025*’ to the center of ecotourism in Northern Luzon by 2055. The shift of focus to ecotourism depicts how the leaders and citizens of La Union recognize the significance of achieving both environmental conservation and economic development. For comparison, the current vision statement for 2025 and the proposed vision statement formulated from the draft vision statements of the participants are shown below.

Current Vision (2025):

*Taking full advantage of the growing tourist arrival brought about by agriculture, tourism and the agri-tourism sites; potential market for visitors due to its strategic location; peace and order; organized private sector who can drive business; political harmony and the clear alignment with the regional development programs, the Province envisions to be: “**The Heart of Agri-Tourism in Northern Luzon by 2025**”*

Proposed Vision (2055):

*The Province of La Union envisions to be: “**The Heart of Ecotourism of Northern Luzon by 2055**” characterized by a dynamic and progressive community. Guided by unified leadership, empowered and inclusive citizens will drive a greener and disaster-resilient environment committed to sustainability.*

5. Participants and Facilitators

The Visioning Workshop was attended by a total of 47 participants composed of PDC, LGUs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and other stakeholders. The event was facilitated jointly by staff from the UPLB and the Office of the Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator of the PGLU (OPPDC-PGLU)

6. Reflections/Concerns/Recommendations/Lesson Learned:

This workshop served as a crucial stepping stone towards achieving the main objective of developing a thirty-year vision for La Union. By identifying pressing

problems and understanding their interconnectedness within watersheds, it facilitated a deeper appreciation of the need for an integrated and collaborative approach to planning. Moreover, it enhanced the awareness and knowledge of land use and development planners regarding the application of the R2R/WEM approach in provincial and local planning.

7. Activity Materials

Materials such as meta cards and markers were mainly used for the most part of the workshop proper to engage the participants during the activities. A PowerPoint presentation was also used during the lecture on the R2R/WEM Approach and the discussion of the watersheds within the province. The link to the Google Drive containing the PowerPoint presentation is provided below:

Google Drive Link: <https://bit.ly/3BtEXBi>

8. Appendices

Appendix 1. Directory of participants.

Name	Designation
Almira V. Abrazado	Chapter Administrator- PRC La Union Chapter
Julius Manabat	OIC - LUPTO
Rizalina Cristobal	Planning Officer - CSFLU
Catherine E. Franco	Provincial Budget Officer
Anabelle L. Camacho	MPDC - LGU Aringay
Angela Grace Peralta	LEEIPO - Assistant Department Head
Paul Joffrey L. Ramirez	Zoning Officer 2 - LGU Balaoan
Rossie Estrelino	P.E. - PGLU
Arvin C. Camacho	PGSOO- PGLU
Mark Rodel A. Tan	Planning Officer I - LGU San Juan
Lany B. Carbonel	Municipal Mayor - LGU San Gabriel
Kelvin John Bentayen	LYDO - LGU San Gabriel
Renato Hernandez	Chairperson - LUCCSO

Rodolfo Abrio	PAFC Chairperson
JP Rima D. Duque	Planning Officer IV - PGLU OPAS
Romeo H. Austria	President - GAL-MAR FIA
Aurie Nellie A. Tumbaga	UBMPC - Chairperson
Felix Baliclic Jr.	PMKLU - President
Vilma Munar	PMKLU - Secretary
Angelika Mae R. Flores	BMRAM - Representative (PGLU/OSP)
Wilfredo T. Dizon Jr.	MPDC (LGU - Luna)
Eva Valdez	SP - SFC
Perline M. Dugenyra	MPDC - LGU Caba
Aileen Jane P. Sobredo	AAI - LGU Caba
Juanito M. Quintoja	MPDO - LGU Rosario
JR Dizon	MPDC - LGU Luna
Jony Sabado	CSO
John Merwin Mendoza	MPDC - LGU Pugo
John Carl Lodevico	
Riyadh Castanyeda	OMDDC Staff - Balaoan
Susan O. Natividad	MPDC - LGU Supiden
Paul Laurence Grosre	Casual - LGU Agoo
Jecea Costales-Pimentel	Planning Officer I - LGU Bauang
Raquel B. Orpilla	PG - ENRO (Bacnotan)
Alfredo G. Tubera	MPDO - LGU Pugo
Jenny J. Fernandez	MPDC - LGU Bagulin
Sharon A. Vilorio	OIC - OPAG (CSF, LU)
Annalyn Rosario-Valdez	PG - ENRO
Merven Medrano	Economic Researcher - PPDO
Nichole Jacildone	PPDO

Carlos Mendoza	PPDO
David M. Rabelas	PGLU
Michaela Delfinado	PPDO - PGLU
Roshelle A. Mamaril	PPDO - PGLU
Marinelle Agonia	UPLB URA I
Aldrin Fandialan	UPLB URA I
Pocholo Jairus del Rosario	UPLB URA I

Appendix 2. Rating for the success indicators during the vision-reality gap.

Theme	Vision Element	Success Indicators	Rating (1 to 4)
Environment	Uphold an Empowered and Resilient Environment Conducive to Agri-Tourism	a.) Growth of agricultural products alongside tourism; Increase in processing facilities; Sufficient sources to produce agri products; Increase in no. of farm sites practicing organic farming; Production beyond sufficiency level	a.) Agree = 8; Strongly Agree = 1
Social/ Institutional	Leverage on Agri-Tourism to Improve Quality of Life	a.) Increase in livelihood; b.) Creation of job opportunities; c.) Increase in the no. of farm tourism sites; d.) Lower poverty rate; Increase in income	a.) Agree = 9; Strongly Agree = 3 b.) Agree = 13; Strongly Agree = 3 c.) Agree = 7 Strongly Agree = 6 d.) Strongly Disagree = 1; Agree = 7;
Economic	Spur Sustainable Agri-Tourism Development	a.) Increase in tourist arrivals;	a.) Agree = 3; Strongly Agree = 5

	Foster Conducive Climate for Tourism, Trade and Industry	a.) Increase in the investments generated in agri-tourism and no. of establishments;	a.) Agree = 6; Strongly Agree = 8
	Sustain Agricultural Development Through Agripreneurship	a.) Agri bazaar; PPAs to help in agri-preneurship: No. of people assisted; No. of agri-enterprise developed	a.) Agree = 6; Strongly Agree = 9
DRRM/ Infrastructure	Accelerate Strategic Development of Disaster and Climate Resilient Infrastructure and Comprehensive Transport System	a.) Less flooding in areas flooded before; b.) Less landslides; c.) Reduced travel time; d.) Increase in agri-tourism transport; Construction of road to agri facilities; e.) Improved access to critical areas; f.) Increased support from NGAs; g.) Improved access to water resources	a.) Strongly Disagree = 1; Agree = 14; b.) Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 1; Agree = 7 c.) Strongly Disagree = 13; Disagree = 3; Agree = 1; d.) Agree = 17; Strongly Agree = 5 e.) Agree = 21; Strongly Agree = 2 f.) Agree = 5; Strongly Agree = 13 g.) Strongly Disagree = 3; Disagree = 4; Agree = 1;

Appendix 3. Photo documentation.

