



Implementation and Effectiveness of the Provincial Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict: An Assessment

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Abstract

Aim: This study assessed the implementation and effectiveness of the Provincial Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (PTF-ELCAC) and identified challenges in its monitoring and reporting processes.

Methodology: Utilizing a descriptive-comparative research design, the study gathered data from national agencies, local government units (LGUs), and community members through a structured survey questionnaire. Quota sampling ensured representative participation. Descriptive statistics summarized perceptions, while inferential analyses determined significant differences among stakeholder groups.

Results: The findings indicated that PTF-ELCAC was generally perceived as *moderately implemented*, reflecting ongoing initiatives but limited achievement of optimal outcomes. Significant perceptual differences were found across groups, particularly in the principles of conflict-cause focus and in clusters such as international engagement, strategic communication, livelihood, basic services, and peace and development support. Community respondents viewed implementation more favorably than agency and LGU officials, revealing a gap between administrative assessments and community experiences.

Conclusion: While PTF-ELCAC exhibits moderate progress, challenges persist in coordination, resource distribution, and stakeholder participation. Bridging perceptual gaps through improved inter-agency collaboration, communication, and locally grounded interventions is vital for enhancing the sustainability and effectiveness of the Whole-of-Nation Approach.

Keywords: PTF-ELCAC, Whole-of-Nation Approach, stakeholder perceptions, operating principles, implementation challenges

INTRODUCTION

The decades-long communist armed conflict in the Philippines has remained a critical challenge to national security and development, prompting successive administrations to adopt varying strategies—ranging from military operations and peace negotiations to socio-economic reforms. Central to the current administration's response is the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), a multi-agency body anchored on the Whole-of-Nation Approach, which recognizes insurgency as rooted in poverty, inequality, historical grievances, and inadequate access to basic services. Its framework emphasizes not only security operations but also the delivery of basic services, infrastructure development, livelihood support, and community empowerment (Casuyon, 2024).

This comprehensive approach is operationalized through twelve clusters or "lines of effort" that integrate diverse initiatives such as local governance empowerment, international engagement, poverty alleviation, and strategic communication. These efforts require strong coordination across national agencies, local government units (LGUs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and local communities. While the NTF-ELCAC has demonstrated promise, its effectiveness remains contested, underscoring the importance of evaluating how policies are implemented at the ground level through the perspectives of national and local officials, CSOs, and community members directly affected by conflict.



This study focuses on Central Luzon, a region historically impacted by insurgency and characterized by diverse conflict drivers, making it an ideal case for assessing the implementation of the Provincial Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (PTF-ELCAC). Specifically, the research examines stakeholder perceptions of the program's operating principles, the integration of its twelve clusters, and the seriousness of challenges in monitoring and reporting activities. By generating evidence-based insights, the study aims to inform strategies that enhance program effectiveness and ultimately contribute to peacebuilding and sustainable development in Central Luzon and other conflict-affected regions of the Philippines.

The Philippine government's efforts to address communist insurgency have evolved through decades of shifting policies and strategies. Earlier approaches were largely dominated by military solutions, often assigning the problem primarily to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP). While these strategies temporarily weakened armed groups, they failed to address the deeper socio-economic and political grievances that fueled recruitment and sustained the conflict. Recognizing these limitations, the government gradually began adopting more integrated and development-oriented frameworks that placed emphasis on governance, service delivery, and community participation (Supreme Court E-Library, 2018).

A turning point came with the issuance of Executive Order No. 70 (EO 70) by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte in December 2018, which institutionalized the Whole-of-Nation Approach. This policy mandated the synchronization of government instrumentalities with the support of the private sector and other stakeholders to counter the influence of communist terrorist groups. Unlike traditional security-centered measures, EO 70 underscored the importance of addressing insurgency at its roots—poverty, inequality, historical grievances, and inadequate access to basic services (Supreme Court E-Library, 2018).

The operational framework of EO 70 is the NTF-ELCAC. At the national level, the task force is chaired by the President, with the Vice President and the National Security Adviser serving as Co-Vice Chairpersons, reflecting strong political will and high-level leadership commitment. A National Secretariat, headed by an Executive Director, coordinates implementation across various government clusters and agencies. This structure cascades down to the Regional (RTF-ELCAC), Provincial (PTF-ELCAC), Municipal/City (M/CTF-ELCAC), and Barangay (B/TF-ELCAC) task forces, each chaired by their respective local chief executives. This tiered system promotes both vertical coordination—ensuring policy alignment from national to local levels—and horizontal collaboration among agencies and stakeholders at each governance level (Supreme Court E-Library, 2018; NTF-ELCAC, n.d.).

Central to the framework are twelve clusters or lines of effort that embody the multi-sectoral nature of the Whole-of-Nation Approach. These include local government empowerment, international engagement, legal cooperation, strategic communication, basic services, livelihood and poverty alleviation, infrastructure and resource management, peace and law enforcement, situational awareness and knowledge management, localized peace engagements, the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) and amnesty program, and sectoral unification and mobilization (National Economic and Development Authority [NEDA], 2019). By design, these clusters integrate security, governance, and development initiatives, recognizing that sustainable peace requires addressing interconnected challenges that extend beyond the military domain (Jabla et al., 2024).

Scholars argue that EO 70 represents a significant departure from previous counterinsurgency strategies by embedding the principles of good governance, inclusivity, and community empowerment at the core of peace and security efforts. Casuyon and Embornas (n.d.) emphasize that this participatory structure strengthens state-society relations by enabling government agencies, LGUs, and CSOs to collaborate in resolving local grievances, thereby reducing insurgents' ability to exploit discontent. Similarly, by placing LGUs and barangay-level task forces at the forefront, the program ensures that peacebuilding and development interventions are context-sensitive and community-driven.

However, the literature also underscores the challenges confronting the Whole-of-Nation Approach. These include sustaining inter-agency coordination across multiple levels, securing sufficient financial and logistical resources, and addressing deeply rooted socio-political grievances that cannot be resolved through short-term programs (Casuyon & Embornas, n.d.). Furthermore, ongoing debates persist regarding issues of human rights, political partisanship, and the long-term institutional sustainability of NTF-ELCAC initiatives. Thus, continuous monitoring, evaluation, and research are essential to assess program impact, identify gaps, and refine strategies to ensure responsiveness to community needs and alignment with democratic principles (NTF-ELCAC, n.d.).

Taken together, the Whole-of-Nation Approach under EO 70 and its operationalization through the NTF-ELCAC signify a comprehensive evolution in the Philippine government's counterinsurgency framework. By integrating security, governance, and socio-economic development, the government seeks to address the multifaceted drivers of conflict in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Nonetheless, the long-term success of this approach will depend on



effective inter-agency coordination, adequate resource mobilization, and the genuine participation of communities in peacebuilding efforts (Casuyon & Embornas, n.d.).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the institutionalization of the Whole-of-Nation Approach under Executive Order No. 70, the implementation of the Provincial Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (PTF-ELCAC) remains underexamined, particularly in terms of its effectiveness, stakeholder perceptions, and operational challenges. While existing literature emphasizes policy intent, there is limited empirical evidence on how implementation varies across provinces and among different stakeholder groups. This study, therefore, addresses the gap by assessing the perceived level of implementation of PTF-ELCAC across its operating principles and cluster integrations, as well as the challenges encountered in monitoring and reporting processes. Understanding these dimensions is crucial to strengthening inter-agency coordination, enhancing local engagement, and improving the overall effectiveness of the Whole-of-Nation Approach.

Research Objectives

The study aimed to investigate the implementation of the Provincial Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (PTF-ELCAC) and the challenges encountered in its implementation. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Describe the perceived level of implementation of the PTF-ELCAC on the operating principles in terms of:
 - a. Whole-of-Nation Approach
 - b. Good Governance
 - c. Stakeholder Participation
 - d. Conflict-Cause Focus
 - e. Prioritized Reforms
 - f. Community Empowerment
 - g. Localized Peace Engagements
2. Determine whether there is a significant difference in the level of implementation of the PTF-ELCAC between provinces and as perceived by the groups of respondents.
3. Describe the perceived level of implementation of the PTF-ELCAC on the cluster or line-of-effort integration in terms of:
 - a. Local Government Empowerment
 - b. International Engagement
 - c. Legal Cooperation
 - d. Strategic Communication
 - e. Basic Services
 - f. Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation
 - g. Infrastructure and Resource Management
 - h. Peace, Law Enforcement, and Development Support
 - i. Situational Awareness and Knowledge Management
 - j. Localized Peace Engagement
 - k. E-CLIP and Amnesty Program
 - l. Sectoral Unification, Capacity Building, Empowerment, and Mobilization
4. Determine whether there is a significant difference in the level of implementation of the PTF-ELCAC on cluster or line-of-effort integration between provinces and as perceived by the groups of respondents.
5. Describe the level of seriousness of the challenges encountered in monitoring and reporting during PTF-ELCAC implementation.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the perceived level of implementation of the PTF-ELCAC based on its operating principles?
2. Is there a significant difference in the level of implementation of the PTF-ELCAC between provinces and among respondent groups?
3. What is the perceived level of implementation of the PTF-ELCAC in terms of the cluster or line-of-effort integration?



4. Is there a significant difference in the level of cluster integration between provinces and among respondent groups?
5. What challenges are encountered in monitoring and reporting during the implementation of the PTF-ELCAC?

Hypotheses

Given the stated research problems, the following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H_0 : There is no significant difference on the level of implementation of the PTF-ELCAC between provinces and as perceived by the groups of respondents.

H_0 : There is no significant difference on the level of effectiveness of the PTF-ELCAC between provinces and as perceived by the groups of respondents.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-comparative research design to comprehensively assess the implementation of the Provincial Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (PTF-ELCAC). The descriptive component enabled the documentation and analysis of respondents' profiles, their perceived level of implementation of PTF-ELCAC operating principles, the extent of cluster or line-of-effort integration, and the seriousness of challenges encountered in monitoring and reporting processes. The comparative aspect facilitated the identification of similarities and differences in implementation levels across provinces and stakeholder groups.

This design was deemed most appropriate because it allowed the study to both describe existing conditions and compare perceptions among groups without manipulating variables. Through this approach, the study generated empirically grounded insights that can inform targeted interventions aimed at improving the efficiency, coordination, and overall effectiveness of PTF-ELCAC initiatives.

Population and Sampling

The study utilized quota sampling, a non-probability technique designed to ensure representation of key stakeholder groups by setting predetermined quotas based on defined characteristics. A total of 150 respondents participated in the study, comprising 25 representatives from national agencies, 25 from local government units (LGUs), and 100 from the community sector.

Respondents were drawn from selected provinces in Central Luzon, a region significantly involved in the implementation of PTF-ELCAC programs. The inclusion of multiple provinces ensured that findings reflected variations in local experiences and operational contexts.

National agency representatives provided insights on policy formulation, planning, and resource allocation; LGU officials shared their perspectives on implementation challenges and coordination mechanisms; and community members—being the primary beneficiaries—offered firsthand accounts of the program's impact and areas for improvement. Including these three stakeholder groups allowed the study to capture a more holistic and balanced understanding of the program's strengths, limitations, and operational realities.

Instrument

The study employed a researcher-developed survey questionnaire to gather quantitative data on stakeholder perceptions of PTF-ELCAC implementation and challenges in its monitoring and reporting processes. The instrument consisted of four main parts:

- Part I: Identified respondents' roles (national agency, LGU, or community), which served as the basis for comparative analysis.
- Part II: Assessed perceptions of PTF-ELCAC implementation based on its seven operating principles—Whole-of-Nation Approach, Good Governance, Stakeholder Participation, Conflict-Cause Focus, Prioritized Reforms, Community Empowerment, and Localized Peace Engagements.
- Part III: Examined perceptions of cluster or line-of-effort integration across twelve clusters, including Local Government Empowerment, International Engagement, Legal Cooperation, Strategic Communication, Basic Services, Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation, Infrastructure and Resource Management, Peace, Law Enforcement, and Development Support, Situational Awareness and Knowledge Management, Localized



Peace Engagement, the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) and Amnesty Program, and Sectoral Unification, Capacity Building, Empowerment, and Mobilization.

- Part IV: Measured the perceived seriousness of challenges in monitoring and reporting PTF-ELCAC activities. Parts II and III used a 4-point Likert scale (4 – *Highly Implemented*, 3 – *Moderately Implemented*, 2 – *Slightly Implemented*, and 1 – *Not Implemented*), while Part IV used a 4-point seriousness scale (4 – *Very Serious*, 3 – *Moderately Serious*, 2 – *Less Serious*, and 1 – *Not Serious*).

To ensure validity and reliability, the instrument underwent content validation by three subject-matter experts—two in the field of public administration and governance and one in educational research and statistics. Validators evaluated each item for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. The computed Content Validity Index (CVI) confirmed that all items met the acceptable standards of relevance and clarity. Subsequently, the instrument was pilot-tested with 30 respondents who shared similar characteristics with the target population. The resulting Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .83 to .97, indicating high internal consistency and reliability.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted from March to May 2025 following the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, who granted formal authorization to conduct the study. Coordination with concerned agencies, LGUs, and community leaders was carried out to secure institutional cooperation and facilitate respondent access.

Participants were informed about the study's objectives, procedures, estimated completion time, and their rights as participants, including voluntary participation and withdrawal at any stage. The survey was administered online through a secure web-based platform to ensure accessibility, efficiency, and confidentiality. Instructions were clearly provided to guide respondents in completing the questionnaire.

After data collection, responses were reviewed for completeness and accuracy. Incomplete or inconsistent entries were either clarified with participants or excluded from the dataset. Final data were securely stored in encrypted digital files and printed records accessible only to the researcher. All data were archived following institutional policies and research ethics protocols.

Data Analysis

The collected data were processed and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics—including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation—were employed to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and perceptions regarding the level of implementation of PTF-ELCAC and the seriousness of identified challenges.

To test hypotheses and determine significant differences among respondent groups, inferential statistics were applied. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether significant differences existed in the perceived level of implementation across provinces and among national, LGU, and community respondents. When significant results were obtained, Tukey's HSD post hoc tests were performed to identify the specific group differences. The level of significance was set at 0.05, ensuring that findings were interpreted within an acceptable margin of statistical reliability.

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to ethical principles governing research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, formal authorization was obtained from the appropriate institutional authorities. Informed consent was secured from all participants after explaining the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were assured of their right to decline or withdraw without any adverse consequences.

Strict confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. All personal identifiers were removed prior to analysis, and data were handled exclusively by the researcher. To ensure compliance with national data protection regulations, all procedures followed the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), which mandates the responsible collection, processing, and storage of personal information. Ethical standards were observed at every stage—from data gathering to interpretation and reporting—upholding the principles of integrity, transparency, and respect for participants' rights.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceived Level of Implementation of the PTF-ELCAC on the Operating Principles

Table 1. Perceived Level of Implementation of the PTF-ELCAC on the Operating Principles

Indicators	National Agency	LGU	Community
Whole-of-Nation Approach	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Good Governance	4 (Highly Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Stakeholder Participation	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Conflict-Cause Focus	4 (Highly Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Prioritized Reforms	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Community Empowerment	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Localized Peace Engagements	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)

The findings on the perceived level of implementation of the PTF-ELCAC operating principles reveal a general trend of *Moderately Implemented* (Median = 3) across most indicators as reported by national agency representatives, local government unit (LGU) officials, and community members. This indicates that while the program's principles are being operationalized, stakeholders perceive implementation gaps that hinder optimal outcomes. Notably, national agencies rated *Good Governance* and *Conflict-Cause Focus* higher (Median = 4, *Highly Implemented*) than LGUs and communities, highlighting a perceptual divergence between policy-level institutions and local actors.

The higher ratings from national agencies may reflect their confidence in established policy frameworks and oversight mechanisms (Wolf et al., 2020). Conversely, lower local assessments suggest that governance and conflict-resolution initiatives may not be consistently visible or impactful at the grassroots level, supporting the argument that policy success depends more on localized implementation than on central formulation (Brinkerhoff, 2025; Vargas & Cooper, 2024). The uniformly moderate ratings for the *Whole-of-Nation Approach*, *Stakeholder Participation*, and *Community Empowerment* further indicate that although multi-sectoral collaboration exists, it has not yet translated into tangible community-level improvements. This aligns with peace and development literature emphasizing that top-down approaches require participatory and empowerment mechanisms to achieve sustainability (Akinbi & Oluwole, 2025; Baquial, 2020).

From a policy standpoint, bridging perceptual gaps between national and local actors is essential to strengthen program credibility and impact. National agencies may consider increasing transparency, improving coordination mechanisms, and fostering participatory governance at the community level (Muhiarta, 2025; Oe & Yamaoka, 2024). Collectively, these findings suggest that while the PTF-ELCAC demonstrates moderate progress in implementing its operating principles, alignment between national strategies and local realities remains incomplete. Addressing these discrepancies may help ensure that governance and peacebuilding reforms yield measurable and inclusive community outcomes.

Differences on the Level of Implementation of the PTF-ELCAC on the Operating Principles

Table 2. Differences on the Level of Implementation of the PTF-ELCAC on the Operating Principles

Indicators	X ²	df	p value
Whole-of-Nation Approach	2.9043	2	0.234
Good Governance	2.0644	2	0.356
Stakeholder Participation	5.5903	2	0.061
Conflict-Cause Focus	11.1506	2	0.004



Prioritized Reforms	3.7990	2	0.150
Community Empowerment	3.8780	2	0.144
Localized Peace Engagements	0.0887	2	0.957

Table 2 presents the results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) examining differences in stakeholder perceptions of PTF-ELCAC implementation. Only *Conflict-Cause Focus* ($p = 0.004$) showed a statistically significant difference among stakeholder groups, confirming the perceptual variations noted earlier. This suggests that while national agencies emphasize strategic frameworks, communities may prioritize addressing underlying social and economic causes of conflict (Ham & Woolcock, 2022; Toolis, 2021).

For other indicators, p -values exceeded 0.05, indicating no statistically significant differences. This consistency reflects shared understanding among stakeholders in implementing most PTF-ELCAC principles. However, the divergence in *Conflict-Cause Focus* underscores the need for deeper engagement with grassroots perspectives, as community-level insights often reveal nuanced local realities overlooked by institutional assessments (JumaAgaya et al., 2021; Slom, 2024). Strengthening participatory mechanisms and ensuring bottom-up feedback may enhance program legitimacy and sustainability.

Perceived Level of Implementation of the PTF-ELCAC on the Clusters/Lines of Effort Integration

Table 3. Perceived Level of Implementation of the PTF-ELCAC on the Clusters/Lines of Effort Integration

Indicators	National Agency	LGU	Community
Local Government Empowerment	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
International Engagement	4 (Highly Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Legal Cooperation	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Strategic Communication	4 (Highly Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Basic Services	4 (Highly Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation	4 (Highly Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Infrastructure and Resource Management	4 (Highly Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Peace, Law Enforcement, and Development Support	4 (Highly Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Situational Awareness and Knowledge Management	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Localized Peace Engagement	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
E-CLIP and Amnesty Program	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)
Sectoral Unification, Capacity Building, Empowerment, and Mobilization	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)	3 (Moderately Implemented)

The results on cluster integration revealed that national agency representatives generally reported higher implementation levels than LGU officials and community members. Six indicators—*International Engagement, Strategic Communication, Basic Services, Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation, Infrastructure and Resource Management, and Peace, Law Enforcement, and Development Support*—were rated as *Highly Implemented* by national agencies, but only *Moderately Implemented* by LGUs and communities. This pattern again demonstrates a perceptual divide between institutional and local perspectives.

National agencies may perceive successful implementation due to visible structural achievements and policy-driven coordination, while local actors assess effectiveness based on tangible improvements in livelihoods and



services. This finding echoes previous studies on policy implementation, which emphasize that success at the macro level does not always guarantee local-level satisfaction (Hitlin & Shutava, 2022; Oh & Lee, 2022). The consistent "Moderately Implemented" ratings for clusters such as *Local Government Empowerment*, *E-CLIP* and *Amnesty Program*, and *Sectoral Mobilization* highlight ongoing challenges in capacity building and participatory engagement.

These insights imply that while PTF-ELCAC has made policy-level progress, translating national achievements into local realities remains a challenge. Strengthening bottom-up communication, local empowerment, and participatory governance may improve perceived implementation effectiveness (Iyer, 2025; Mulder, 2023).

Differences on the Level of Implementation of the PTF-ELCAC on the Clusters/Lines of Effort Integration

Table 4. Differences on the Level of Implementation of the PTF-ELCAC on the Clusters/Lines of Effort Integration

Indicators	X ²	df	p value
Local Government Empowerment	4.12	2	0.128
International Engagement	19.26	2	< .001
Legal Cooperation	5.92	2	0.052
Strategic Communication	17.79	2	< .001
Basic Services	18.67	2	< .001
Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation	14.16	2	< .001
Infrastructure and Resource Management	10.09	2	0.006
Peace, Law Enforcement, and Development Support	14.11	2	< .001
Situational Awareness and Knowledge Management	4.91	2	0.086
Localized Peace Engagement	2.22	2	0.330
E-CLIP and Amnesty Program	4.84	2	0.089
Sectoral Unification, Capacity Building, Empowerment, and Mobilization	4.65	2	0.098

The ANOVA results show statistically significant differences among stakeholders in six clusters: *International Engagement*, *Strategic Communication*, *Basic Services*, *Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation*, *Infrastructure and Resource Management*, and *Peace, Law Enforcement, and Development Support*. These findings confirm perceptual disparities between national policymakers and local actors, with national agencies rating these aspects more positively (Bayerlein et al., 2020; Williams, 2021).

These gaps may stem from differing vantage points—national agencies focusing on systemic coordination, while local stakeholders evaluate success based on accessibility and impact. Similar findings in governance studies indicate that misalignment between institutional and community assessments can erode trust and program credibility (Kyohairwe et al., 2022; Ndofirepi, 2023).

On the other hand, the non-significant indicators—such as *Localized Peace Engagement* and *Legal Cooperation*—suggest a shared understanding of their functions and consistent implementation across levels. This coherence provides a foundation for improving more complex clusters through shared learning (Birken et al., 2020; Hampton et al., 2024).

Level of Seriousness of the Challenges Encountered on the Monitoring and Submission of Reports in the Implementation of PTF-ELCAC

Table 5. Level of Seriousness of the Challenges Encountered on the Monitoring and Submission of Reports in the Implementation of PTF-ELCAC

Indicators	National Agency	LGU	Community
Lack of standardized reporting templates across different agencies.	2 (Less Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)
Difficulties in collecting data from remote or conflict-affected areas.	2 (Less Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)
Insufficient training or capacity building for personnel involved in monitoring and reporting.	2 (Less Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)
Limited access to technology or internet	2 (Less Serious)	3 (Moderately)	3 (Moderately)



connectivity for data submission.		Serious)	Serious)
Coordination challenges among different government agencies and stakeholders.	2 (Less Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)
Time constraints and heavy workloads impacting timely report preparation and submission.	2 (Less Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)
Lack of clear guidelines or protocols for monitoring and evaluation.	2 (Less Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)
Inadequate resources (financial, human, logistical) allocated for monitoring and reporting activities.	2 (Less Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)
Data security and confidentiality concerns related to information sharing.	2 (Less Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)
Lack of feedback mechanisms or utilization of monitoring data for program improvement.	2 (Less Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)	3 (Moderately Serious)

The results revealed a consistent perceptual gap: national agencies rated all challenges as *Less Serious* (Median = 2.0), whereas LGU and community groups rated them as *Moderately Serious* (Median = 3.0). These included lack of standardized templates, inadequate resources, poor coordination, limited technology access, and absence of feedback mechanisms.

This divergence implies that national agencies possess stronger institutional capacity and clearer protocols, while LGUs and communities face operational barriers. These findings are consistent with decentralization studies noting persistent gaps between national planning and local execution (Charbit, 2020; Smith, 2023). Improving vertical communication, contextualizing support, and redistributing resources may enhance reporting accuracy and coordination (Chowdhury et al., 2021; Maneesh et al., 2025; Ng et al., 2022).

Overall, these results underscore the need for more inclusive and responsive monitoring systems that integrate community feedback and provide equitable capacity-building support for local implementers.

Conclusions

The analysis of the perceived implementation of the PTF-ELCAC revealed that most stakeholders rated the program as *Moderately Implemented*. Although significant progress has been achieved in several domains, particularly at the policy and structural levels, gaps remain in coordination, resource allocation, and local empowerment. Statistically significant differences emerged in areas such as *Conflict-Cause Focus, International Engagement, Strategic Communication, Basic Services, Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation, Infrastructure and Resource Management, and Peace, Law Enforcement, and Development Support*.

Community members often perceived higher levels of implementation than institutional respondents, suggesting a divergence between lived experiences and administrative assessments. Moreover, challenges in monitoring and reporting were viewed as less serious by national agencies but moderately serious by LGUs and communities. These differences highlight the need for enhanced inter-agency collaboration, equitable resource distribution, and participatory mechanisms to align national and local perspectives. Strengthening these dimensions may lead to a more effective, credible, and sustainable implementation of the PTF-ELCAC framework.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Standardization of Monitoring Procedures. Clear and uniform reporting templates and guidelines may be institutionalized, complemented by regular training for LGU and community representatives to enhance data accuracy and timeliness.
2. Strengthening Coordination Mechanisms. Regular inter-agency meetings and a centralized digital reporting system may be established to streamline communication and bridge perceptual gaps among stakeholders.
3. Enhancing Community Participation. Active grassroots involvement may be encouraged through local oversight committees and structured feedback channels to ensure community perspectives inform policy adjustments.
4. Capacity Building and Resource Support. Adequate financial, human, and technological support may be allocated to LGUs and community partners to sustain data collection and monitoring activities.



5. Improving Transparency and Communication. Strategic communication campaigns, publication of progress reports, and public dialogues may be implemented to build stakeholder trust and promote shared accountability.
6. Focused Intervention on Conflict-Cause Issues. Further qualitative and quantitative research may be conducted to identify the root causes of perceptual differences and guide targeted interventions.
7. Cluster Performance Review. A systematic evaluation of key clusters—*International Engagement, Strategic Communication, Basic Services, Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation, Infrastructure and Resource Management, and Peace, Law Enforcement, and Development Support*—may be undertaken to assess best practices and replicate effective strategies.

Collectively, these recommendations may contribute to strengthening inter-agency collaboration, promoting equitable resource distribution, and enhancing participatory governance. Through these efforts, the PTF-ELCAC framework may achieve more inclusive, transparent, and sustainable outcomes in advancing peace and development in the Philippines.

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