

## PRESS RELEASE

# ICSC: Systems change and stakeholder empowerment are needed for more sustainable public transport

*QUEZON CITY, March 14, 2024* – Integrating electric vehicles, particularly electric jeepneys (e-jeepneys), in the country’s public transportation system will require systems transformation; thorough analyses of its economic and social impact; active participation and collaboration of all stakeholders, including transport workers, cooperatives, and commuters; and proper leadership and governance, according to a [series of reports launched by Manila-based think tank Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities \(ICSC\)](#).

“Technology alone cannot drive change, and the systems approach to transitioning our public transport system cannot be overemphasized. We have to invest in the capacity of transport cooperatives, workers, and drivers, and strengthen partnerships among all stakeholders. The complementation between subnational and national work is also critical in pushing forward sustainable transport solutions,” said Maria Golda Hilario, ICSC’s Director for Urban Development.

National agencies, local government units (LGUs), transport cooperatives, academic experts, and civil society organizations gathered today to discuss the findings of the three reports, which revisited the experiences of early adopters of e-jeepneys and reexamined the feasibility of its adoption in the Philippine public transport system.

Each report had a specific focus:

1. [“The E-Jeepney Initiative of the ICSC: A Case Study of a Pioneering Contribution to Inclusive Energy Transition in the Philippines’ Public Transport”](#) recounts the experience of ICSC from 2007 to 2017 in pioneering the adoption of e-jeepneys in the country;
2. [“The Economics of E-Jeepney Transport Operations: Business Models, Enabling Factors, and Current Challenges”](#) looks at the experiences of operators and their business models and financing in the e-jeepney implementation, taking into consideration the costs, benefits, and challenges; and
3. [“Enabling Policy and Governance Environment for E-Vehicle Adoption and Integration in Public Transport”](#) provides recommendations on establishing an enabling policy and governance environment for e-vehicle integration in public transport.

“Cooperatives have different needs, experiences, and skill sets, and they reside under different local governments. There is no one solution since every cooperative requires unique and contextualized support, making direct collaborations and conversations all the more crucial,” said Dr. Sandy Mae Gaspay, Associate Professor of the University of the Philippines Diliman Institute of Civil Engineering, who co-authored the second report.

Among the enabling factors for e-jeepney operations identified are the availability of a [Local Public Transport Route Plan \(LPTRP\)](#), national and local government support, lower operational costs, cooperative alliance, access to alternative financing schemes, and potential profits from the [public utility vehicle \(PUV\) Service Contracting Program](#). While the barriers and challenges include competition and oversupply, LGU support, government financial assistance, and issues in day-to-day operations such as fare collection pilferage, fleet management, and financial management capacity.

Representatives from the Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Energy (DOE), electric vehicle manufacturers, and transport cooperatives served as reactors and provided their insights on the three reports.

“These studies serve as useful tools to reinforce what we have started with the PUV Modernization Program, [now called the Public Transport Modernization Program (PTMP)], and help enhance what public transport modernization is supposed to be,” said Engr. Riza Marie Paches, Board Member of DOTr’s Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB).

### **‘It is not the vehicles; it should be the people’**

UP School of Urban and Regional Planning’s (SURP) Director for Research and Publication Dr. Ma. Sheilah Napalang pointed out that the PTMP’s intended goals should lead to “environmental sustainability, passenger welfare and satisfaction, and livelihood generation and stability.”

“Public transportation is not about the vehicles; it is about the people. When we talk about e-jeepneys, we need to talk about the just transition. The collaboration of cooperatives serves as the human capital in the modernization of public transport. Beyond technological considerations, we have to look at the human capital as part of the equation,” Dr. Napalang stressed.



One story features the experience of the Lagao Drivers and Operators Transport Cooperative (LADOTRANSCO) and the Public Transport Alliance of General Santos (PTAG), where their alliance enabled bulk purchasing and ensured a steady supply of parts with favorable pricing. The city government of General Santos also provided PHP100,000 worth of subsidy per unit from their local climate change fund to help support down payments.

In addition, LADOTRANSCO and PTAG General Manager Robert Cang mentioned that their cooperative tapped a program of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), where they were approved a loan worth approximately PHP2.5 million for the acquisition of equipment to set up a 43.3-kilowatt solar charging facility for their e-jeepeys.

“It is important to help cooperatives reach government agencies in order to access such initiatives and programs. It is also crucial to inform transport groups about utilizing energy from sources such as solar, which are more affordable and sustainable modes to power e-jeepeys,” Cang added.

“Transport cooperatives represent a democratic business model, empowering their members and fostering community involvement. Understanding their experiences, incurred costs, and reaped benefits can provide insights into making public transport operations more efficient and inclusive,” said Angelo Kairos dela Cruz, Executive Director of ICSC.

#### **NOTE TO THE EDITOR**

The three reports can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/revisiting-ejeepney>.  
Event photos can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/e-jeepey-launch-photos>.

#### **ABOUT**

The Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities is a climate and energy policy group based in the Philippines that promotes climate resilience and low-carbon development.

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