CENTER FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNANCE
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES

POLICY BRIEF No. 2026 - 07
ISSN (Online) 0000-0000

eLegis and the Institutionalization of Open Local Legislative Data in the Philippines

Keith Isaiah Catalan | Pauline Palacio
Jerona Buliong | Reginald G. Ugaddan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Enacted ordinances and approved resolutions are public records, yet they are among the hardest government documents to find. Each Secretary to the Sanggunian keeps the records of only one LGU. The Local Government Code requires local measures to be posted and published to take effect, but it does not require LGUs to keep them available and searchable afterward. Local budgets and procurement are disclosed under the Full Disclosure Policy. Local legislation has no similar rule.

The eLegis is developed by the Vice Mayors' League of the Philippines (VMLP) and the Center for Local and Regional Governance (CLRG) to serve as a national online repository of enacted ordinances and resolutions. As of November 6, 2026, it holds more than 82,000 ordinances and resolutions from 456 LGUs, and the record grows as more LGUs join and upload their measures. Local legislators and sanggunian secretariats use it to see what other LGUs have enacted, maintain records across terms, and prepare new measures. DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2026-041 encourages city and municipal sanggunians to submit their measures. eLegis was built for local legislators and their staff, and citizens do not yet have access.

This brief recommends building on eLegis and on existing disclosure systems. Enacted ordinances can be added to the Full Disclosure Policy and the Seal of Good Local Governance. The E-Governance Act can set a common data standard for local legislative records, and guidance is needed on how to share these records. Direction is also needed on citizen access to enacted local measures.

Keywords: *eLegis, local legislation, Sanggunian, open government, open data, Full Disclosure Policy*

POINTERS FOR PRACTITIONERS AND POLICYMAKERS

- **Local legislation has no disclosure rule.** LGUs post their budgets and procurement under the Full Disclosure Policy. No similar rule covers the ordinances and resolutions they pass.
- **Posting is not the same as access.** Posting in conspicuous places makes an ordinance take effect. After the posting period, getting a copy usually means writing to the Secretary of the Sanggunian.
- **eLegis serves local legislators.** It was designed for Sanggunian members and staff. Citizen access to local legislative measures needs its own direction, with safeguards for personal information.

DISCLAIMER
This policy brief is solely that of the author(s) and does not necessarily reflect the position of the Center for Local and Regional Governance (CLRG) or its partner institutions.

What is eLegis?

The eLegis Reference System is a national online repository of enacted city and municipal ordinances and approved resolutions. It is a joint project of the VMLP and CLRG, supported by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) through DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2026-041 (23 July 2026), which encourages all city and municipal sanggunians to submit electronic copies of their ordinances and resolutions to eLegis.

Background

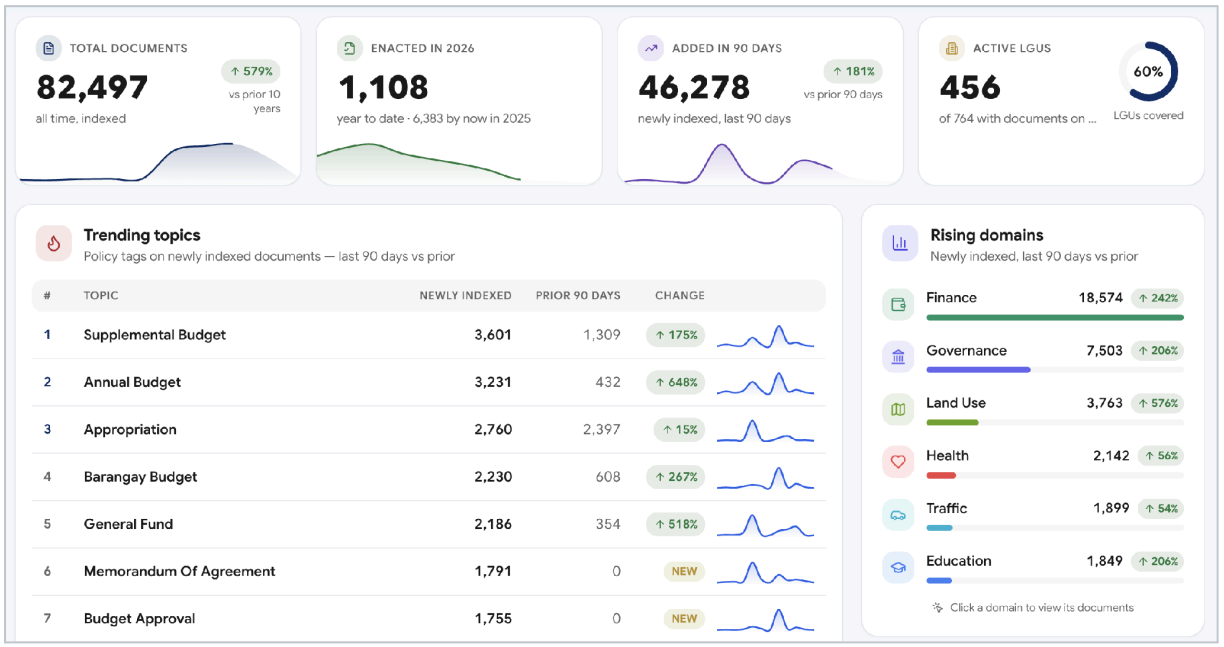
eLegis started in 2004 as a project of the VMLP and the Ayala Foundation but did not continue. The VMLP revived the idea in 2024, choosing CLRG as its partner.

Users and Coverage

Local legislators, Secretaries to the Sanggunian, and Sanggunian staff of participating LGUs sign in with accounts set up by their LGU administrator. The platform was designed for their use, and citizens do not yet have access. As of early November 2026, eLegis held 82,497 ordinances, resolutions, and other local legislative documents from 456 active LGUs, grouped into 18 policy areas. About 35 percent are finance measures, and budget measures such as supplemental and annual budgets are among the most recently added subjects (Figure 1; eLegis Philippines, 2026). These numbers will increase as more LGUs join and continue to upload their measures.

Figure 1

Legislative Activity Across LGUs in eLegis



Note. Screenshot from the eLegis Trends page, November 6, 2026. The page shows total documents, measures enacted in 2026, documents added in the last 90 days, active LGUs, the subjects most often tagged in recently added measures, and the policy areas with the most new documents. The figures change as new documents are added.

What is uploaded, and who can see it?

Only enacted ordinances and approved resolutions are uploaded in the system. Proposed measures still in committee or on the floor are not. All participating LGUs can view the uploaded enacted ordinances. The list of resolutions, with the number, date, title, and subject of each, is also shared. The full text of uploaded local legislation is shared with personal identifiable information removed or reduced. Resolutions on quasi-judicial cases and executive sessions stay with the LGU that passed them. Each LGU also has a private folder for its plans, budgets, and draft measures, visible only to its own users.

Main Features

Upon logging in, users see a feed of measures recently passed by other sanggunians, each with a summary and subject tags. Users are also allowed to customize their feed by following specific LGUs or policy areas. Users also see how many LGUs have passed similar measures and can use a measure as a model for their own. A search function finds measures by subject. An "Ask eLegis" function answers questions and cites the ordinances and resolutions it used. A trends page shows legislative activity by LGU and subject over time. A drafting tool helps users prepare ordinances and resolutions using artificial intelligence, and a quality checker helps them review draft measures before they are deliberated. These tools are intended to assist the sanggunian and do not replace the local legal officer's opinion or the sangguniang panlalawigan's review.

POLICY CONTEXT

Open government in the Philippines

The Philippines is one of the eight founding members of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), formed in 2011. Since then, it has made 75 commitments across six national action plans, and its local governments have made 17 more (Open Government Partnership, 2025). Executive Order No. 31, s. 2023 institutionalized the Philippine Open Government Partnership (PH-OGP) and expanded participation by non-government sectors (Independent Reporting Mechanism, 2024). The 6th PH-OGP National Action Plan (2023–2027), the first to run for four years, includes commitments on freedom of information, data transparency, digital governance, and citizen participation at the national and local levels (Department of Budget and Management, 2023).

The E-Governance Act (Republic Act No. 12254) provides a legal basis for this agenda. It covers all branches of government, including LGUs. It names the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) as the lead implementing agency and requires local ICT projects to follow national plans and standards.

The Open Data Charter

Transparency is a core principle of open government. It requires that government decisions and information be accessible, timely, complete, and released in formats that meet basic open data standards (Open Government Partnership, 2011). The Open Data Charter (ODC) applies this principle through six principles (Open Data Charter, n.d.):

1. Open to the Public. Government data is public and should be available to all unless an exception applies based on the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173). It should not be released only upon request.

2. Timely and Comprehensive. Complete information should be released promptly and, where possible, in its original form.

3. Accessible and Usable. Public information should be easy to find and use.

4. Comparable and Interoperable. Data should follow common standards so that it can be compared and combined.

5. For Improved Governance and Citizen Engagement. Open data allows citizens to participate in government decisions and exercise their right to information.

6. For Inclusive Development and Innovation. Open data supports better decisions and cooperation on social and economic concerns.

The Philippines took up open data early. Its 3rd OGP National Action Plan (2015–2017) included an open data commitment, carried out through Open Data Philippines under Joint Memorandum Circulars No. 2014-01 and 2015-01 (Open Government Partnership, n.d.-a). However, results were limited because agencies were slow to change their practices and few citizens used the data (Aceron, 2017).

Existing transparency mechanisms for LGUs

The Electronic Freedom of Information (eFOI) portal, established under Executive Order No. 2, s. 2016, handles requests for executive branch records. It covers national government agencies, government-owned and controlled corporations, and state universities and colleges. LGUs are

covered only if they pass their own FOI ordinances.

The Full Disclosure Policy, under DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2010-083, requires provinces, cities, and municipalities to post key financial documents and transactions. The Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG), first developed under the 2nd National Action Plan (2013–2015) and later enacted as Republic Act No. 11292, includes Full Disclosure Policy compliance in its assessment (Medina-Guce, 2016). Compliance is high. In 2025, 38,523 barangays, or 97.7 percent, complied with the Barangay Full Disclosure Policy, the highest rate on record (Chavez, [Manila Bulletin], 2026). These mechanisms, however, cover finances and executive records. None of them covers the measures passed by the sanggunian.

WHERE IS LOCAL LEGISLATION?

The 1987 Constitution guarantees the right of the people to information on matters of public concern, including access to official records (Art. III, Sec. 7). Enacted ordinances and approved resolutions are official acts of the sanggunian and are public documents. They set local taxes and fees, regulate businesses, authorize spending, and define residents' rights and duties.

Even so, local legislative records are hard to obtain. The Local Government Code (Republic Act No. 7160) sets out how ordinances are enacted, reviewed, and made known, but not how they are kept available. The Secretary to the Sanggunian keeps the records and issues certified copies (Sec. 469). Ordinances of component cities and municipalities are reviewed by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (Sec. 56). Ordinances take effect after posting in conspicuous places and, for those with penal sanctions, publication (Sec. 59). The Code does not require LGUs to keep a digital record, post enacted measures online, or make them searchable. As a result, local legislation is scattered across physical files and LGU websites, and what the public can see depends on each LGU.

Congress has moved on a national right-to-information law. The Senate passed Senate Bill No. 1432 in May 2026, and the House of Representatives passed House Bill No. 9937 in June 2026; as of June 2026, the two versions were awaiting reconciliation in a bicameral conference (Orcullo, 2026; Tamayo, 2026). The Senate version covers local governments. A right-to-information law, however, works on request. Open data principles go further. They require public records to be released without a request, kept up to date, and presented in a common format.

Table 1 compares current rules with the first four principles of the Open Data Charter. Principles 5 and 6 refer to results, which depend on the first four.

Table 1

Current Rules on Local Legislation Compared With the Open Data Charter

ODC principle	What current rules require	What is missing
Open by Default	Posting in conspicuous places and, for ordinances with penal sanctions, publication (RA 7160, Sec. 59); certified copies on request (Sec. 469)	After the posting period, the public must request a copy from each LGU
Timely and Comprehensive	No national rule on when, or whether, all enacted measures are made available after they take effect	Online posting, where LGUs do it, is often incomplete or late
Accessible and Usable	No requirement to keep records online or searchable	Records are kept in physical files or on LGU websites that differ in layout and completeness
Comparable and Interoperable	No common format or minimum details (number, title, date enacted, subject, status) for local measures	Ordinances cannot be compared or combined across LGUs

Note. Principles from the Open Data Charter (n.d.). The last column refers to the absence of a national requirement. Some LGUs already do more than the rules require

HOW ELEGIS MEASURES AGAINST OPEN DATA PRINCIPLES

eLegis was designed as a working tool for local legislators and their staff, not as a public portal. Compared with the Open Data Charter, it meets most of the principles for its LGU users (Table 2). Citizen access was not part of its original design, so the Charter's first principle, open by default, does not yet extend to the public. eLegis collects, organizes, and standardizes local legislative records, laying the groundwork for citizen access. The recommendations set out the direction for citizen access.

Table 2

eLegis Compared With the First Four Open Data Charter Principles

ODC principle	For LGU users	For the public
Open by Default	Met for enacted ordinances and the list of resolutions	Not covered by the current design. Access requires an account
Timely and Comprehensive	Depends on how quickly and completely each LGU uploads	Not applicable until public access is opened
Accessible and Usable	Search by subject; access from any location	Not covered by the current design
Comparable and Interoperable	Records follow one format across LGUs	Not covered by the current design. No public dataset yet

Note. Assessment by the authors based on the platform's current features.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Access and transparency

Access to local legislative records differs widely across LGUs. Records are kept in physical files and on separate websites, which makes them hard to find. LGUs with more resources can maintain their own online systems, while others still rely on bulletin boards and printed copies. A common, accessible record would give residents of every LGU the same basic access to the ordinances that govern them, regardless of the LGU's income class.

Citizen participation

Residents and civil society organizations can take part more fully in public hearings and committee consultations when they know which ordinances are already in force and how other LGUs have handled the same concern. A public record of enacted measures supports this. It does not replace public hearings, since only enacted measures are released.

Learning across LGUs and continuity across terms

Access to other LGUs' ordinances helps sanggunians learn from one another. A sanggunian preparing a solid waste or anti-smoking ordinance can see how other LGUs wrote theirs and how these fared on review. Studies on how policies spread across governments separate this kind of learning from simple copying (Shipan & Volden, 2008). Copying without adjusting to local conditions remains a risk. A complete record also reduces what is lost when terms end (Pollitt, 2000). The problem is greater in sanggunians, where members serve three-year terms, and records staff are few. The same record is useful to national agencies, universities, and research groups studying local governance.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The actions below build on systems that already work for local finances and can be carried out under existing laws and issuances.

Include enacted ordinances in the Full Disclosure Policy.

The Full Disclosure Policy (Memorandum Circular No. 2010-083) can be amended or supplemented to require provinces, cities, and municipalities to post their enacted ordinances on the Full Disclosure Policy Portal, with the ordinance number, title, date enacted, and subject, within a set period after the ordinance takes effect. The portal already has the reporting process, compliance monitoring, and high

compliance rates. Adding legislation to it is the fastest way to set a national minimum.

Add legislative disclosure to the Seal of Good Local Governance.

Add online posting of enacted ordinances to the Seal of Good Local Governance transparency criteria under Republic Act No. 11292, starting as a non-scoring indicator to give LGUs time to comply. The Seal helped raise Full Disclosure Policy compliance, and it can do the same for legislation.

Adopt a model provision for local FOI ordinances.

Make a model provision available for sanggunians to adopt in their local FOI ordinances. It would require online posting of enacted ordinances and a list of resolutions without waiting for a request, with clear exceptions for personal information and quasi-judicial and executive-session matters.

Set a minimum data standard for local legislative records.

The E-Governance Act may issue a minimum data standard for local legislative records. The standard should include the ordinance or resolution number, title, enactment date, effectivity date, subject, status (in force, amended, or repealed), and the enacting sanggunian. A common standard allows records to be compared and combined across LGUs, whether they are kept on an LGU website or in eLegis.

Set a direction for citizen access to local legislative measures.

eLegis was built for local legislators, and that purpose should not change. Citizens, however, also have a right to see the ordinances that govern them. The community should agree on a direction for citizen access, with safeguards for personal information. This can be proposed as a commitment in the next PH-OGP National Action Plan, building on the Open Local Legislative Processes commitment of the 2017–2019 plan (Open Government Partnership, n.d.-b). The timing of any public access to eLegis rests with those who manage it.

Guide the sharing of local legislative records.

Guidance is needed on handling personal information in ordinances and resolutions that are shared or posted online. Document the roles, data-sharing agreements, and appointment of a data protection officer for eLegis.

CONCLUSION

Through the Full Disclosure Policy and the Seal of Good Local Governance, the government has shown that LGUs can be required and encouraged to disclose their finances. Local legislation has not received the same attention compared to other areas of transparency. Ordinances take effect after posting and publication, and are then hard to find. Compared with the Open Data Charter, local legislative records are not open by default, complete, easy to use, or comparable across LGUs. eLegis gives local legislators a national record of local measures. A clear direction for citizen access would extend the same benefit to the public. The actions in this brief can bring local legislation into the country's open government agenda.

REFERENCES

Aceron, J. (2017). *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Philippines mid-term progress report 2015–2017*. Open Government Partnership. https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Philippines_Midterm-Progress_2015-2017_final.pdf

Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines. (1987).

Department of Budget and Management. (2023). *6th Philippine Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2023–2027*. https://ogp.dbm.gov.ph/ogp-content/nap/6th/6th-PH-OGP-NAP-Report_final.pdf

Department of the Interior and Local Government. (2010). *Full disclosure of local budget and finances, and bids and public offerings* (Memorandum Circular No. 2010-083).

Department of the Interior and Local Government. (2026, July 23). *eLegis Reference System* (Memorandum Circular No. 2026-041).

Executive Order No. 2, s. 2016. (2016, July 23). *Operationalizing in the executive branch the people's constitutional right to information and the state policies to full public disclosure and transparency in the public service and providing guidelines therefor*. https://lawphil.net/executive/execord/eo2016/eo_2_2016.html

Executive Order No. 31, s. 2023. (2023, June 20). *Institutionalizing the Philippine Open Government Partnership and for other purposes*. https://www.lawphil.net/executive/execord/eo2023/eo_31_2023.html

Independent Reporting Mechanism. (2024). *Philippines action plan review 2023–2027*. Open Government Partnership. https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/philippines-action-plan-review-2023-2027/

Manila Bulletin. (2026, February 1). DILG: 97.7% of OH barangays meet full disclosure policy. https://mb.com.ph/2026/02/01/dilg-977-of-oh-barangays-meet-full-disclosure-policy

Medina-Guce, C. (2016, November 23). *Good housekeeping: Local governance performance measures in the Philippines*. Open Government Partnership. https://www.opengovpartnership.org/stories/good-housekeeping-local-governance-performance-measures-in-the-philippines/

Open Data Charter. (n.d.). *Principles*. https://opendatacharter.org/principles/

Open Government Partnership. (2011). *Open government declaration*. https://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-we-work/joining-ogp/open-government-declaration/

Open Government Partnership. (2025). *Philippines open government journey*. https://www.opengovpartnership.org/philippines-open-government-journey/

Open Government Partnership. (n.d.-a). *Open data (PH0031)*. https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/philippines/commitments/PH0031/

Open Government Partnership. (n.d.-b). *Open local legislative processes (PH0055)*. https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/philippines/commitments/PH0055/

Orcullo, J. (2026, June 3). House approves bill sought to ease access to government documents. *Daily Tribune*. https://tribune.net.ph/2026/06/03/house-approves-bill-sought-to-ease-access-to-government-documents

Pollitt, C. (2000). Institutional amnesia: A paradox of the "information age"? *Prometheus, 18*(1), 5–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/08109020050000627

Republic Act No. 7160. (1991). *Local Government Code of 1991*.

Republic Act No. 11292. (2019). *The Seal of Good Local Governance Act of 2019*.

Republic Act No. 12254. (2025). *E-Governance Act*. https://batasnatin.com/laws/ra-12254

Shipan, C. R., & Volden, C. (2008). The mechanisms of policy diffusion. *American Journal of Political Science, 52*(4), 840–857. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00346.x

Tamayo, B. E. (2026, May 5). Senate passes freedom of information bill. *The Manila Times*. https://www.manilatimes.net/2026/05/05/news/national/senate-passes-freedom-of-information-bill/233514

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CLRG manages eLegis in partnership with the **Vice Mayors' League of the Philippines (VMLP)**. The VMLP is the national organization of all vice mayors from cities and municipalities in the Philippines. It serves as an avenue for Vice Mayors to discuss relevant issues and advance local legislation.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Keith Isaiah G. Catalan, Pauline O. Palacio, and Jerona Buliong are Research Associates of the Center for Local and Regional Governance (CLRG)

Reginald G. Ugaddan, PhD, is an Associate Professor of UP NCPAG and the Director of the UP NCPAG Center for Local and Regional Governance (CLRG).

HOW TO CITE

Catalan, K. I. G., Palacio, P. O., Buliong, J., & Ugaddan, R. G. (2026). *eLegis and the institutionalization of open local legislative data in the Philippines* (CLRG Policy Brief No. 2026-07). Center for Local and Regional Governance, University of the Philippines-National College of Public Administration and Governance. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24003769



Center for Local and Regional Governance

National College of Public Administration and Governance
University of the Philippines Diliman

Established by the University of the Philippines (UP) and Congress as the Local Government Center in 1965, the **Center for Local and Regional Governance (CLRG)** is UP's research, training, and consulting center for local governments. The Center is a constituent unit of the National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) and subscribes to NCPAG's paradigm of the healthy mix of theory and practice (praxis).

THE CLRG POLICY BRIEF

The CLRG Policy Brief is an annual collection of concise, evidence-based documents designed to help the government address specific policy challenges published. This policy brief is for policymakers and public administrators at the national and local levels, along with other government stakeholders (e.g., national agencies, LGUs, and others). It simplifies complex issues into a clear analysis and offers a research-based strategic perspective.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Reginald G. Ugaddan, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief

Reinalyn M. Velasquez
Managing Editor

Editorial Staff

Sheryll Mae P. Pascobillo, CIE, LPT
Florabelle G. Tanguiling, R.Agr.
John Vincent J. Bucal, Ph.D.

Connect with us

If you have inquiries/concerns for this Policy Brief, email us:
clrgpolicybrief.upd@up.edu.ph

Website
https://ncpag.upd.edu.ph/our-centers/clrg/clrg-policy-briefs/

Facebook
facebook.com/up.localgov

Email
clrgpolicybrief.upd@up.edu.ph

Phone Number
8981-8500 loc 4161