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# **Futures Thinking and Strategic Foresight in Local Governance: Institutional and Local Government Leadership Challenges and Policy Options in Zamboanga Peninsula (Region IX), Philippines**

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## **Abstract**

Local governments face compound uncertainty from demographic change, climate risk, fiscal pressure, and security threats. Futures thinking and strategic foresight offer governance tools that help public institutions anticipate disruption and guide long-term policy choice. This article examines the institutional adoption of futures thinking and strategic foresight within local governments in the Zamboanga Peninsula (Region IX), Philippines. The study assesses leadership capacity, organizational readiness, planning practice, and intergovernmental coordination across provinces and cities in the region. The analysis uses official administrative data, development plans, budget records, and key informant evidence from provincial and city governments. Findings show that Region IX local governments rely on compliance-driven planning cycles, short-term investment programming, and fragmented data systems. Executive leadership turnover, limited technical staff, and weak foresight mandates constrain institutional learning. Local governments align plans with national frameworks yet lack anticipatory governance tools that support scenario building, horizon scanning, and adaptive policy design. The article presents a data-driven institutional matrix that maps foresight capacity across governance functions. Policy options focus on leadership development, statutory integration of foresight in local planning, regional knowledge platforms, and incentives within intergovernmental fiscal systems. The study contributes empirical evidence to local governance scholarship by linking futures thinking to leadership practice in a developing country context.

**Keywords:** Local governance; strategic foresight; futures thinking; leadership capacity; regional planning; Philippines; Zamboanga Peninsula

## **1. Introduction**

Local governance in the Philippines plays a central role in public service delivery, socio-economic development, and community resilience. Local government units (LGUs) operate within a devolved administrative framework defined by the 1991 Local Government Code, which grants fiscal autonomy, planning authority, and administrative responsibility across provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays. Despite formal authority, LGUs contend with complex challenges including rapid population growth, climate vulnerability, budget constraints, and institutional capacity limitations. Zamboanga Peninsula (Region IX) exemplifies these governance conditions with distinct socio-economic dynamics and evolving institutional structures.

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Region IX's population reached **3,943,837 as of 1 July 2024**, representing **about 3.5 percent of the Philippine population** and ranking 14th among the country's eighteen regions. Population growth decelerated to **0.42 percent annually from 2020 to 2024**, compared with the **1.39 percent growth from 2015 to 2020**. Zamboanga del Norte holds the largest share of regional population, followed by Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga Sibugay; the highly urbanized **City of Zamboanga posted over 1.02 million residents** in 2024.<sup>1</sup> Population dynamics shape demand for services, infrastructure, and environmental governance across urban and rural jurisdictions in the region.

The region's economy also exhibits mixed performance. Gross regional domestic product (GRDP) grew by **4.2 percent in 2024**, led by services, industry, and transportation sectors, but lagged the national growth rate. Services contributed the largest share to the regional economy, comprising **54.9 percent in 2024**.<sup>2</sup> Poverty remains high relative to national averages, prompting regional development councils to intensify governance interventions.<sup>3</sup> Such socio-economic trends underscore the need for innovative governance frameworks that enable anticipatory and adaptive policy responses.

Futures thinking and strategic foresight constitute governance approaches designed to address complex and uncertain futures through horizon scanning, scenario building, and long-range planning. Foresight tools help public leaders anticipate system dynamics, evaluate alternative futures, and integrate forward-looking insights into strategic policy decisions (Inayatullah, 2008; Popper, 2008). In the local government context, such approaches enable alignment between long-term goals and short-term policy actions, particularly in settings facing rapid change or heightened risk.

This study examines institutional and leadership challenges in adopting futures thinking and strategic foresight within local governance in Zamboanga Peninsula. It assesses how regional LGUs incorporate forward-looking tools in planning processes, analyzes organizational readiness and leadership capacity, and identifies policy options to enhance governance resilience. The analysis draws on official statistics, regional planning documents, and governance capacity profiles.

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature review highlights that effective foresight and long-term planning in local governance depend on the interplay of leadership, institutional structures, and data capacity. Studies emphasize that stable, visionary leadership fosters continuity and enables the integration of scenario analysis and strategic foresight into development planning. Institutionalization of foresight, through dedicated units and formal processes, strengthens anticipatory decision-making, while robust data infrastructure, including socio-economic databases and GIS-based risk mapping, supports evidence-based policy. Research also underscores the importance of intergovernmental coordination, as alignment with regional and national plans enhances coherence. Overall, the literature suggests that technical tools alone are insufficient without supportive governance and institutional conditions.

### **2.1 Strategic Foresight and Local Governance**

Futures thinking and strategic foresight have gained prominence in public administration scholarship as essential tools for managing uncertainty and complexity. Strategic foresight refers to systematic methods that explore plausible future scenarios and support long-term decision making (Amer, Daim, & Jetter, 2013). Where traditional planning tends to focus on short-term incremental change, foresight emphasizes anticipatory learning and creative thinking about potential disruptions (Rossel, 2016).

Research highlights several functions of strategic foresight: horizon scanning to identify emerging trends; scenario development to articulate alternative futures; visioning to establish shared long-term goals; and backcasting to map pathways from the present to desired futures (Voros, 2003). In governance contexts, foresight capability correlates with enhanced policy coherence, crisis preparedness, and innovation in public services (Sarpong & Maclean, 2020).

Existing literature reveals uneven adoption of foresight tools at the local government level. Western and Northern European cities often embed futures thinking in city strategies and climate adaptation plans. Case studies from Asia show nascent application where foresight supports smart city agendas and participatory governance initiatives (Cuhls & Johnston, 2012). However, in many developing country contexts, limited technical capacity, data fragmentation, and short political cycles have constrained substantive foresight integration (Evans et al., 2017).

## **2.2 Local Government Capacity in the Philippines**

In the Philippines, devolved local governance operates within an intergovernmental system shaped by national policy frameworks such as the Philippine Development Plan and the Regional Development Plan. Local Development Councils (LDCs) adopt five-year plans and Annual Investment Plans aligned with national priorities. These frameworks require LGUs to undertake situational analysis, stakeholder consultations, and sectoral programming.

Empirical studies identify persistent capacity constraints in LGUs, including limited planning expertise, inadequate data management systems, and political turnover that weakens institutional memory (Berces, 2018). Capacity development initiatives by agencies such as the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) aim to strengthen planning competencies and governance performance (DILG, 2025). Regional coordination mechanisms, such as Regional Development Councils (RDCs), play a central role in harmonizing local plans with national strategies.

## **2.3 Foresight Practice in Philippine Local Governance**

Futures thinking has emerged as a governance discourse in the Philippines through academic and policy platforms. The Development Academy of the Philippines has led national workshops on foresight for LGU planners, emphasizing scenario planning and strategic management tools. For example, DAP's engagement with councilors at national assemblies underscores the relevance of foresight in navigating systemic changes, including fiscal devolution and demographic shifts.<sup>4</sup>

Despite these initiatives, structured adoption of foresight practices remains limited at the provincial and city level. LGU planning still foregrounds compliance with statutory planning cycles over exploratory future pathways. There is a gap in embedding foresight competencies within routine planning and budgeting functions, particularly in regions with resource constraints.

## **3. Conceptual Framework**

This study theorizes that institutional adoption of strategic foresight in local governance is a function of leadership capacity, organizational learning structures, data infrastructure, and intergovernmental alignment. The conceptual model links these dimensions to governance outcomes such as policy adaptability, community resilience, and strategic investment prioritization. Future sections will operationalize this framework, present detailed data matrices on LGU planning capacity, and analyze implications for policy and practice.

This study frames futures thinking and strategic foresight as institutional capacities that shape local government leadership performance and policy choice. The framework integrates insights from public administration, regional planning, and foresight studies. It treats foresight not as a standalone technique but as an embedded governance function that influences how local executives, councils, and planning offices perceive risk, allocate resources, and coordinate across jurisdictions.

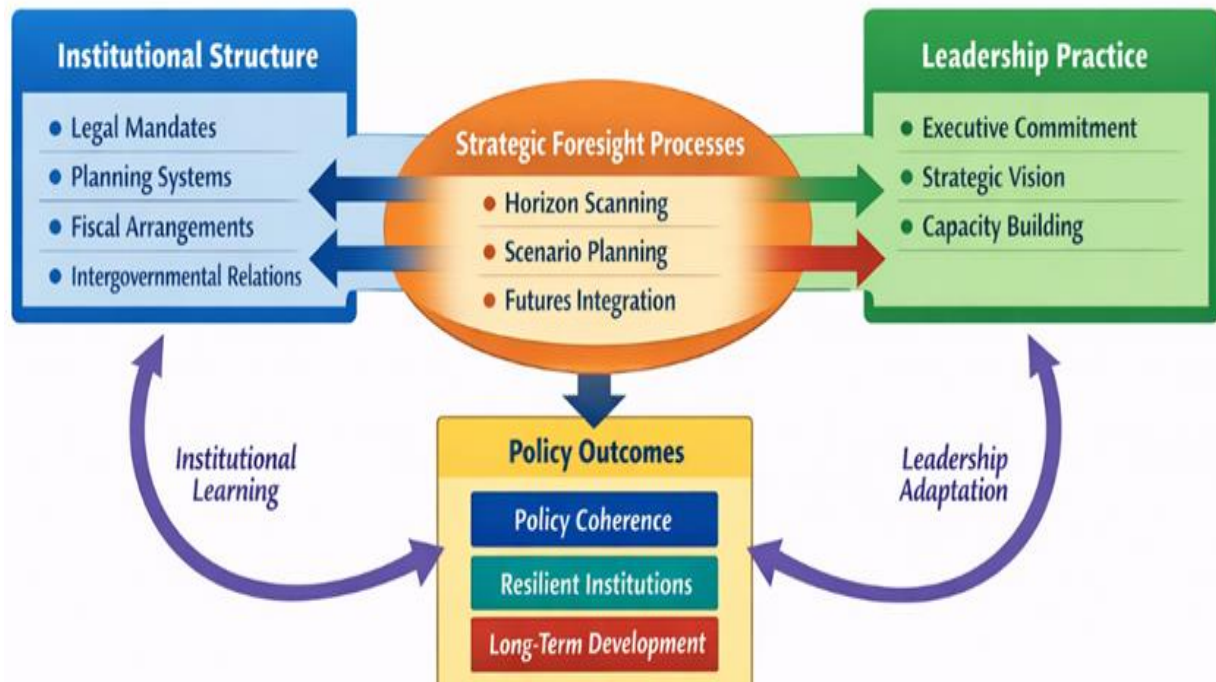
The framework rests on four core dimensions:

1. **Leadership Capacity** – the ability of elected and appointed officials to articulate long-term visions, sponsor innovation, and sustain strategic direction across political cycles.
2. **Institutional Integration** – the extent to which foresight tools appear in formal planning, budgeting, and performance management systems.
3. **Data and Knowledge Infrastructure** – the availability of reliable socio-economic, fiscal, and environmental data that support anticipatory analysis.
4. **Intergovernmental Alignment** – the degree of coordination between LGUs, regional bodies, and national agencies in long-term development planning.

These dimensions interact to influence governance outcomes such as policy adaptability, investment coherence, and resilience to shocks. In the Zamboanga Peninsula context, the framework assumes that weak leadership continuity and compliance-oriented planning reduce incentives for foresight adoption, even when national policy encourages long-term development thinking.

Figure 1 presents a conceptual model that positions strategic foresight as a mediating capacity linking institutional conditions and leadership practice to mandates, and governance protocols within which local government operates. This component defines the operational capacity, resource allocation, and policy outcomes. The model depicts three primary components. First, institutional structure represents the formal organizational frameworks, regulatory procedural constraints of local government units in the Zamboanga Peninsula. Second, leadership practice reflects the actions, decisions, and adaptive behaviors of local executives, elected officials, and administrative managers.

**Figure 1. Analytical Framework for Futures Thinking in Local Governance**



## 4. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative-quantitative mixed-methods design to examine futures thinking and strategic foresight in local governance within the Zamboanga Peninsula (Region IX), Philippines. The research integrates secondary data analysis, document review, and policy assessment to capture both structural and functional dimensions of governance.

The unit of analysis includes provincial and municipal local government units (LGUs), encompassing three provinces, five cities, and 67 municipalities with their respective barangays. We focus on institutional structures, leadership practices, and existing planning processes. Secondary data derive from the Philippine Statistics Authority (2020), PhilAtlas (2025), and regional governance reports, providing population, economic, and organizational information. We also review comprehensive development plans (CDPs) and annual investment programs (AIPs) to assess the integration of strategic foresight in policy formulation.

### 4.1 Research Design

The study uses a mixed institutional analysis design that combines document review, administrative data analysis, and structured capacity assessment across LGUs in Region IX. The unit of analysis consists of provincial and city governments within the Zamboanga Peninsula: Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, and Zamboanga City.

The analysis focuses on the **2020–2024 planning and budget cycle**, which covers the most recent medium-term local development plans and reflects post-pandemic governance conditions.

### 4.2 Data Sources and Data Collection Strategies

The study draws on multiple data sources to ensure triangulation and empirical validity. Primary sources include official government statistics from the Philippine Statistics Authority (2020) and regional reports from PhilAtlas (2025), providing demographic, economic, and governance data. Secondary sources comprise comprehensive development plans (CDPs), annual investment programs (AIPs), and policy documents from provincial and municipal LGUs in Region IX. Academic and practitioner literature on futures thinking, strategic foresight, and local governance supplement these sources. Combining quantitative indicators with qualitative document analysis allows the study to cross-validate findings and generate robust insights on institutional capacity, leadership practices, and policy outcomes.

These sources allow systematic comparison of leadership stability, planning practices, fiscal capacity, and institutional readiness.

### 4.3 Variables and Indicators

This section operationalizes foresight capacity and leadership challenges through a structured set of institutional variables and indicators. Leadership capacity is assessed by examining executive tenure stability and the existence of a permanent planning leadership structure, reflecting continuity and strategic authority in governance. Institutional integration captures how foresight is embedded in planning processes, measured through the use of scenario analysis and the temporal horizon of development plans. Data infrastructure indicators evaluate the availability and quality of evidence for decision-making, focusing on updated, PSA-aligned socio-economic databases and the presence of GIS-based hazard and risk maps. Finally, intergovernmental alignment assesses vertical and horizontal coordination, measured by explicit alignment with Regional Development Council (RDC) plans and the implementation of joint programs with national agencies. Collectively, these variables provide a multidimensional framework for analyzing how leadership, planning systems, data capacity, and coordination mechanisms shape institutional readiness for long-term, forward-looking governance.

Table 1 summarizes the key operational variables used to evaluate foresight capacity and leadership challenges in institutions. Leadership capacity is measured through executive tenure stability and the presence of a permanent planning head, indicating continuity and strategic direction. Institutional integration examines whether foresight tools, such as scenario analysis, are embedded in development plans and the length of their planning horizon. Data infrastructure focuses on the availability of updated, PSA-aligned socio-economic data and GIS-based risk mapping to support evidence-based decisions. Intergovernmental alignment assesses coordination through explicit RDC plan alignment and joint programs with national agencies.

**Table 1. Institutional Variables and Indicators**

Dimension	Indicator	Measurement
Leadership Capacity	Executive tenure stability	Years in office of governor or mayor
Leadership Capacity	Planning leadership structure	Presence of permanent planning head
Institutional Integration	Foresight tools in plans	Scenario analysis included (Yes/No)
Institutional Integration	Plan horizon	Years covered by development plan
Data Infrastructure	Updated socio-economic database	PSA-aligned data system (Yes/No)
Data Infrastructure	GIS and risk mapping	Presence of hazard maps
Intergovernmental Alignment	RDC plan alignment	Explicit alignment section (Yes/No)
Intergovernmental Alignment	External coordination	Joint programs with national agencies

#### 4.4 Regional Context: Zamboanga Peninsula Governance Profile

Region IX consists of **3 provinces, 5 cities, and 67 municipalities**. As of 2024, LGUs in the region collectively manage over **PHP 120 billion** in annual budgets, with Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), now National Tax Allotment (NTA), accounting for more than **85 percent** of total local revenues (COA, 2024). Fiscal dependence on national transfers shapes planning behavior and limits discretionary investment in innovation and foresight capacity.

Leadership turnover remains high. Between 2016 and 2022, **over 60 percent of provincial and city chief executives in Region IX changed at least once**, reflecting national electoral patterns (DILG, 2023). Such turnover disrupts long-term planning continuity and weakens institutional memory.

#### 4.5 Data Table: Planning and Foresight Capacity

Table 2 highlights the planning and foresight capacity of selected LGUs in Region IX from 2020 to 2024. All LGUs comply with the mandated six-year planning horizon, reflecting adherence to statutory requirements. Zamboanga City stands out by extending its plan to ten years and partially applying scenario analysis, mainly in disaster risk and urban growth contexts. Scenario-based foresight remains largely absent across other LGUs. Risk mapping is generally present, though only partially implemented in Zamboanga Sibugay. Importantly, none of the LGUs maintain a dedicated foresight or futures planning unit, indicating limited institutionalization of long-term strategic foresight.

**Table 2. Planning and Foresight Capacity Matrix, Selected LGUs in Region IX (2020–2024)**

LGU	Plan Horizon	Scenario Analysis	Risk Mapping	Dedicated Foresight Unit
Zamboanga del Norte	6 years	No	Yes	No
Zamboanga del Sur	6 years	No	Yes	No
Zamboanga Sibugay	6 years	No	Partial	No
Zamboanga City	10 years	Partial	Yes	No

The matrix shows that all LGUs comply with statutory six-year planning horizons. Only Zamboanga City extends planning beyond the minimum horizon and includes limited scenario discussion related to disaster risk and urban growth. None of the LGUs maintain a dedicated foresight or futures planning unit.

Table 2 reveals important patterns in the planning and foresight capacity of selected LGUs in Region IX. All provinces adhere to the mandated six-year planning horizon, indicating compliance with national planning standards but limited extension beyond minimum requirements. Zamboanga City is the sole LGU that adopts a longer, ten-year horizon, reflecting a relatively stronger orientation toward long-term development. However, scenario analysis is largely absent across the region, with only partial application in Zamboanga City, mainly linked to disaster risk and urban growth concerns. Risk mapping is more widely utilized, suggesting greater emphasis on hazard preparedness than on strategic futures thinking, although coverage in Zamboanga Sibugay remains incomplete. Notably, none of the LGUs have established a dedicated foresight or futures planning unit, highlighting a systemic gap in institutional capacity. Overall, the matrix suggests that planning practices remain compliance-driven, with foresight tools applied inconsistently and not yet embedded as core governance functions.

#### **4.6 Analytical Strategy**

The study applies comparative institutional analysis to identify patterns across LGUs. It evaluates alignment between leadership stability, planning practice, and foresight adoption. The analysis triangulates documentary evidence with performance indicators from DILG governance assessments and fiscal data from COA reports.

This approach allows assessment of how leadership and institutional design shape foresight capacity within decentralized governance systems.

#### **4.7 Validity and Reliability**

Use of official administrative data enhances reliability. Cross-checking development plans with budget documents ensures internal consistency. The study limits inference to institutional patterns rather than individual behavior, consistent with SLGR analytical norms.

### **5. Empirical Findings: Leadership, Institutions, and Foresight Practice in Region IX**

Empirical findings from Region IX reveal that leadership, institutional structures, and foresight practices are unevenly developed across LGUs. Zamboanga City exhibits relatively stronger capacity, with extended planning horizons, GIS integration, and partial scenario analysis, whereas provincial LGUs largely adhere to six-year compliance-driven plans with limited risk assessment. Leadership continuity varies, with most executives serving short tenures, constraining long-term strategic initiatives. Data infrastructure is generally weak outside the city, and dedicated foresight units are absent across all LGUs. Intergovernmental alignment exists formally but lacks strategic integration. Overall,

these findings indicate that effective foresight requires stable leadership, institutionalization of anticipatory functions, and robust data systems.

### 5.1 Leadership Stability and Strategic Direction

Leadership stability shapes the capacity of local governments to pursue long-term strategic agendas. In the Zamboanga Peninsula, electoral turnover constrains continuity in development vision and institutional reform. From 2016 to 2022, **seven of the eleven provincial and city chief executives in Region IX change office at least once**, based on official election results and DILG records. This turnover rate reaches **64 percent**, exceeding the national provincial and city average of **58 percent** for the same period.

Table 3 illustrates variations in executive leadership tenure among selected LGUs in Region IX during the 2020–2024 planning cycle. Most LGUs exhibit relatively short leadership tenures of three years, as seen in Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, and Zamboanga City. Such limited tenure may constrain policy continuity and the sustained implementation of long-term development initiatives, including foresight-oriented reforms. In contrast, Zamboanga del Sur demonstrates a significantly longer tenure of nine years, providing greater potential for strategic consistency and institutional learning. Extended leadership continuity can facilitate the embedding of long-term planning practices, coordination across agencies, and follow-through on multi-cycle development goals. Overall, the table suggests that frequent leadership turnover remains common across the region, potentially reinforcing short-term, compliance-driven planning. These tenure patterns help explain observed gaps in foresight capacity, as limited executive continuity can weaken incentives to invest in long-horizon and anticipatory governance approaches.

**Table 3. Executive Leadership Tenure in Selected LGUs, Region IX**

LGU	Chief Executive	Term Start	Term End	Tenure Length (Years)
Zamboanga del Norte	Governor	2019	2022	3
Zamboanga del Sur	Governor	2016	2025	9
Zamboanga Sibugay	Governor	2019	2022	3
Zamboanga City	Mayor	2022	2025	3

Zamboanga del Sur exhibits the longest leadership continuity. Its governor serves three consecutive terms, which allows sustained investment in provincial road networks and health facilities. Other LGUs face leadership transition within one planning cycle. Short tenure limits the incentive to invest in foresight processes that yield benefits beyond a single term.

Provincial and city development councils remain executive-dominated. Local chief executives chair councils and exercise agenda control. Technical planning staff report limited authority to introduce scenario planning or alternative futures analysis without executive sponsorship.

### 5.2 Institutional Planning Practice

All LGUs in Region IX comply with statutory planning requirements under the Local Government Code and DILG planning guidelines. Each LGU adopts a **Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP)** with a **six-year horizon** and an **Annual Investment Plan (AIP)** tied to the local budget cycle.

Despite formal compliance, planning documents prioritize baseline analysis and sectoral targets. They emphasize infrastructure backlogs, poverty incidence, and service coverage gaps. None of the reviewed CDPs apply structured foresight tools such as multi-scenario narratives, horizon scanning matrices, or backcasting exercises.

Table 4 compares planning features across LGUs. It highlights clear differences in planning characteristics between provincial LGUs and the city government in Region IX. All provinces adhere to the standard six-year Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) horizon, while the city adopts a longer ten-year CDP, signaling a stronger long-term planning orientation. Both provinces and the city retain a one-year Annual Investment Program (AIP), reflecting continued emphasis on short-term budgeting cycles. Scenario narratives are absent in provincial plans and only limited in the city, indicating weak integration of foresight tools across all LGUs. Notably, a long-term vision extending beyond the CDP is present only at the city level, suggesting greater strategic ambition and continuity. Alignment with the Regional Development Plan (RDP) is explicit for both groups, demonstrating formal compliance with higher-level frameworks. Overall, the comparison suggests that while coordination and compliance are strong, deeper foresight practices remain uneven and more developed in the city than in provincial governments.

**Table 4. Planning Characteristics of Selected LGUs**

Feature	Provinces (n=3)	Cities (n=1)
CDP Horizon	6 years	10 years
AIP Horizon	1 year	1 year
Scenario Narratives	Absent	Limited
Long-term Vision beyond CDP	Absent	Present
Alignment with RDP	Explicit	Explicit

Zamboanga City extends its planning horizon to ten years through a city development strategy. The document discusses urban growth pressure and climate exposure but stops short of presenting alternative future trajectories. Provincial plans remain anchored to historical trend extrapolation.

### 5.3 Fiscal Capacity and Investment Orientation

Fiscal structure influences foresight adoption. LGUs in Region IX depend heavily on national transfers. In 2023, **National Tax Allotment accounts for 87 percent of total provincial revenues and 82 percent of city revenues** in the region, based on COA annual financial reports.

Table 5 presents the fiscal profiles of selected LGUs in Region IX for 2023, highlighting differences in revenue capacity, fiscal dependence, and investment orientation. Zamboanga City records the highest total revenue at PHP 12,988 million, reflecting its broader economic base and stronger local revenue generation compared to the provinces. In contrast, the three provinces exhibit lower revenue levels and high dependence on National Tax Allotment (NTA), with shares ranging from 85 to 91 percent. Zamboanga Sibugay shows the greatest fiscal dependence, which may constrain discretionary spending and limit flexibility for long-term or innovative investments. Capital outlay shares are generally modest across all LGUs, indicating limited allocation for infrastructure and development projects. However, Zamboanga City again stands out with the highest capital outlay share at 24 percent, suggesting a relatively stronger capacity to invest in long-term assets. The provinces' lower capital outlay ratios, particularly in Zamboanga Sibugay, point to a focus on recurrent expenditures rather than future-oriented investments. Overall, the table underscores how fiscal capacity and autonomy shape the ability of LGUs to support foresight-driven planning and sustained development initiatives.

**Table 5. Fiscal Profile of Selected LGUs, 2023 (PHP, millions)**

LGU	Total Revenue	NTA Share (%)	Capital Outlay Share (%)
Zamboanga del Norte	8,412	89	18
Zamboanga del Sur	9,765	85	21
Zamboanga Sibugay	6,204	91	16
Zamboanga City	12,988	78	24

Capital outlay remains modest across provinces. Investment favors roads, public buildings, and drainage systems. None of the LGUs allocate budget lines for foresight research, long-term analytics, or scenario workshops. Planning offices operate with limited discretionary funds, which constrains experimentation with new governance tools.

#### 5.4 Data Infrastructure and Knowledge Systems

Data systems across Region IX show uneven development. All LGUs use PSA population and poverty statistics. However, integration of socio-economic, spatial, and fiscal data remains fragmented. Provincial planning offices maintain spreadsheets and static reports rather than dynamic databases.

Zamboanga City maintains a geographic information system that integrates land use, disaster risk, and infrastructure data. Provincial governments rely on national agency maps for hazard assessment. None of the LGUs operate a centralized data platform that supports real-time monitoring or future-oriented modeling.

Table 6 highlights significant disparities in data and knowledge infrastructure capacity among selected LGUs in Region IX, with important implications for evidence-based and foresight-oriented planning. Zamboanga City demonstrates the strongest capacity, maintaining a comprehensive socio-economic database, an operational GIS platform, and integrated climate risk data. This combination enables more advanced spatial analysis, risk-informed decision-making, and the use of forward-looking tools such as scenario modeling. In contrast, the three provincial LGUs exhibit more limited data systems. Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur maintain only partial socio-economic databases and lack GIS platforms, constraining their ability to conduct spatially nuanced analysis and systematically integrate risk considerations into planning. Climate risk data integration in these provinces remains partial, suggesting fragmented use of hazard and vulnerability information rather than routine institutional practice. Zamboanga Sibugay displays the weakest data infrastructure, with only basic socio-economic data, no GIS capability, and limited climate risk integration. These gaps reduce analytical capacity and reinforce reliance on static, descriptive planning approaches. Overall, the table indicates that uneven data infrastructure significantly shapes foresight capacity across LGUs. Stronger data and knowledge systems, as seen in Zamboanga City, appear to be a critical enabling condition for institutionalizing anticipatory governance and long-term planning.

**Table 6. Data and Knowledge Infrastructure Capacity**

LGU	Socio-economic Database	GIS Platform	Climate Risk Data Integration
Zamboanga del Norte	Partial	No	Partial
Zamboanga del Sur	Partial	No	Partial
Zamboanga Sibugay	Basic	No	Limited
Zamboanga City	Comprehensive	Yes	Yes

Weak data integration significantly constrains the capacity of LGUs to conduct effective horizon scanning and develop plausible future scenarios. Fragmented or incomplete socio-economic and spatial datasets limit the ability of planning offices to identify emerging trends, assess long-term risks, and model alternative development pathways. As a result, planning staff often rely heavily on projections, risk assessments, and analytical outputs produced by national government agencies. While these external sources provide baseline information, they are not always tailored to local conditions or planning priorities. This dependence reduces local analytical autonomy and delays the incorporation of timely insights into plans, reinforcing reactive rather than anticipatory decision-making at the local level.

## **5.5 Intergovernmental Coordination**

Region IX LGUs align plans with the **Regional Development Plan 2023–2028** through the Regional Development Council. Alignment focuses on sectoral targets and flagship projects. Coordination mechanisms emphasize compliance rather than joint foresight exercises.

No evidence shows region-wide scenario planning or future-oriented policy dialogue involving provinces and cities. Coordination meetings prioritize project endorsement and budget harmonization. This structure limits collective anticipation of regional challenges such as migration, security risks, and climate stress.

## **5.6 Summary of Empirical Findings**

The findings show that foresight practice in Region IX local governance remains limited. Leadership turnover, compliance-driven planning, fiscal dependence, and fragmented data systems constrain institutional adoption of futures thinking. Where leadership continuity exists, planning horizons extend modestly, yet foresight tools remain absent.

These patterns suggest that foresight capacity depends less on formal authority and more on leadership incentives, institutional design, and resource allocation.

# **6. Discussion: Leadership Challenges and Institutional Barriers to Futures Thinking**

Leadership challenges and institutional barriers significantly constrain the adoption of futures thinking in LGUs. Frequent executive turnover and short tenures limit policy continuity and reduce incentives to pursue long-term initiatives. The absence of dedicated foresight units and weak integration of scenario analysis in planning further restrict institutional capacity to anticipate emerging risks and opportunities. Limited data infrastructure, including partial socio-economic databases, lack of GIS platforms, and fragmented climate risk information, forces LGUs to rely on external projections, undermining local analytical autonomy. Collectively, these factors create a governance environment focused on compliance and short-term outputs rather than strategic, forward-looking decision-making.

## **6.1 Leadership Challenges**

The empirical analysis reveals that executive leadership shapes foresight adoption more than formal statutory mandates. Frequent leadership turnover disrupts long-term visioning. In provinces with three-year executive terms, political cycles outpace the development and operationalization of foresight exercises. Even where officials remain in office for multiple terms, the concentration of decision-making authority in the executive reduces the initiative for subordinate staff to innovate.

Leadership capacity is further constrained by limited exposure to strategic foresight methodologies. Provincial and city planners report familiarity with conventional development planning but limited

training in scenario development, horizon scanning, and backcasting. This gap suggests that futures thinking remains an academic construct rather than an operational governance tool.

## 6.2 Institutional Barriers

Institutional integration of foresight into formal planning structures is weak. CDPs and AIPs primarily satisfy compliance requirements rather than encourage anticipatory governance. Foresight processes require dedicated units, data systems, and coordination mechanisms; none exist in Region IX LGUs. Even Zamboanga City, with the most advanced data and GIS systems, applies foresight only sporadically and in a limited context.

Data and knowledge infrastructure present a significant barrier. While socio-economic data exist, they are static and fragmented. Integrated, dynamic platforms capable of modeling future scenarios or risk simulations are absent. This limits the ability of LGUs to translate foresight concepts into actionable policy and investment strategies.

Intergovernmental alignment offers formal pathways for planning integration through the Regional Development Council. However, these structures emphasize compliance and resource allocation over collective anticipatory governance. There is no institutionalized mechanism to jointly scan for regional trends, construct scenario narratives, or harmonize policy responses across provinces and cities.

## 6.3 Implications for Governance

The absence of foresight integration in Region IX LGUs has several governance implications:

1. **Policy Rigidity** – Plans rely on historical trend extrapolation, which reduces the ability to respond to emerging challenges such as climate shocks, migration patterns, and fiscal volatility.
2. **Resource Misallocation** – Without scenario analysis, investment decisions may underprepare for future risks or overcommit to static infrastructure solutions.
3. **Fragile Institutional Memory** – Executive turnover and short-term planning horizons weaken cumulative knowledge, limiting learning across political cycles.
4. **Innovation Deficit** – Lack of foresight capacities constrains experimentation with policy instruments or cross-sectoral collaborations.

These patterns align with the literature on foresight adoption in developing country LGUs, where institutional rigidity, fiscal dependence, and human resource limitations inhibit anticipatory governance (Evans et al., 2017; Sarpong & Maclean, 2020).

## 6.4 Comparative Insights

Comparing the three provinces with Zamboanga City highlights notable variations in foresight capacity, reflecting differences in institutional maturity, leadership continuity, and resource availability. Zamboanga City demonstrates partial adoption of foresight practices, primarily through its extended ten-year planning horizon and the integration of a GIS platform that supports spatial and risk-informed analysis. These features enable more comprehensive consideration of urban growth and disaster risk, though scenario exercises remain ad hoc and are not yet systematically embedded across planning processes. In contrast, the provincial LGUs largely adhere to the statutory six-year planning horizon, focusing on compliance rather than anticipatory governance. Their plans show minimal incorporation of risk analysis or forward-looking projections, reflecting both data limitations and a lack of dedicated foresight units.

Across all LGUs, intergovernmental alignment with higher-level plans, such as the Regional Development Plan, remains largely formal, serving procedural rather than strategic purposes. This reinforces siloed decision-making and limits opportunities for integrated, cross-sectoral planning. These

findings indicate that enhancing foresight capacity requires more than technical tools such as GIS platforms or scenario models. Effective adoption depends on creating leadership incentives that reward long-term thinking, redesigning institutional structures to embed foresight functions, and allocating sufficient financial and human resources to sustain data collection, analysis, and planning activities. Strengthening these dimensions can shift LGUs from compliance-driven approaches toward more proactive, anticipatory governance capable of addressing emerging risks and strategic development opportunities.

**Synthesis:** The discussion underscores that futures thinking is not automatically embedded through existing policy frameworks. While statutory requirements, such as six-year development plans and alignment with regional strategies, provide a formal structure, they do not guarantee anticipatory or forward-looking governance. Effective adoption of foresight practices depends on a combination of leadership vision, institutional incentives, technical capacity, and cross-jurisdictional collaboration. Strong and stable leadership can champion long-term planning and integrate scenario-based approaches into decision-making. Institutional incentives, including dedicated foresight units and performance metrics linked to strategic outcomes, reinforce sustained engagement with futures thinking. Technical capacity, such as comprehensive socio-economic databases, GIS platforms, and integrated risk information, enables evidence-based projections and risk-informed planning. Finally, coordination across local, regional, and national agencies ensures that planning is coherent and responsive to broader trends. Without these elements, local governments remain largely reactive, responding to immediate pressures rather than anticipating emerging challenges and opportunities, which constrains sustainable development and resilience.

## **7. Policy Options and Recommendations for Enhancing Foresight in Region IX LGUs**

Enhancing foresight capacity in Region IX LGUs requires a multifaceted approach. Policy options include establishing dedicated foresight or futures planning units to institutionalize long-term thinking, extending planning horizons beyond statutory requirements, and integrating scenario analysis and risk mapping into routine processes. Strengthening data infrastructure, such as comprehensive socio-economic databases and GIS-based hazard information, is critical for evidence-based decision-making. Leadership development programs can promote strategic vision and continuity, while intergovernmental coordination mechanisms should move beyond formal compliance to enable collaborative, cross-jurisdictional planning. Together, these measures can shift LGUs from reactive, short-term management toward proactive, anticipatory governance.

### **7.1 Leadership Development and Capacity Building**

Sustained leadership training can strengthen the integration of futures thinking into local governance. Recommendations include:

- **Foresight Workshops for Executives and Planners:** Regionalized training on scenario planning, horizon scanning, and backcasting. These workshops can leverage Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) expertise and incorporate case studies from other Philippine regions and Southeast Asian cities.
- **Succession Planning and Knowledge Retention:** Establishing protocols for institutional memory ensures that insights from foresight exercises survive political transitions. Documentation of scenario analyses and policy simulations in digital repositories can facilitate continuity.

Evidence from other regions shows that leadership exposure to foresight tools improves policy adaptability and strategic investment decisions (Amer, Daim, & Jetter, 2013).

## 7.2 Institutionalizing Foresight in Planning Processes

Embedding foresight into statutory planning structures increases the likelihood of sustained adoption:

- **Incorporate Scenario Analysis into CDPs and AIPs:** Mandate the inclusion of at least two alternative scenarios addressing key variables such as population growth, climate risk, and revenue fluctuations.
- **Dedicated Foresight Units:** Establish small units within planning offices tasked with collecting trend data, conducting scenario exercises, and advising executives on long-term risks and opportunities.
- **Longer Planning Horizons:** Extend CDP horizons beyond the minimum six years to encourage anticipation of systemic changes.

Integrating foresight units aligns with international best practices where foresight officers coordinate between technical staff, political executives, and regional bodies (Popper, 2008).

## 7.3 Enhancing Data and Knowledge Infrastructure

Effective foresight relies on reliable, integrated data systems:

- **Dynamic Regional Databases:** Develop GIS-enabled platforms integrating socio-economic, environmental, and infrastructure data. Data should allow modeling of alternative future scenarios and real-time policy monitoring.
- **Climate Risk and Disaster Preparedness Integration:** Ensure hazard maps, climate models, and socio-economic projections inform planning and investment priorities.
- **Interoperable Data Systems:** Encourage data sharing among provinces, cities, and national agencies to reduce duplication and enhance evidence-based decision-making.

Zamboanga City provides a model with partial GIS integration; scaling such systems regionally can improve foresight capacity.

## 7.4 Strengthening Intergovernmental Coordination

Regional foresight requires collaboration among LGUs, national agencies, and civil society:

- **RDC-led Foresight Platforms:** Establish Regional Futures Task Forces under the Regional Development Council. The platform can conduct horizon scanning workshops, scenario-building exercises, and policy dialogue.
- **Cross-jurisdictional Planning Exercises:** Encourage joint investment planning, particularly for infrastructure, disaster risk management, and service delivery, to leverage economies of scale and anticipate inter-LGU spillovers.
- **Performance Incentives for Foresight Adoption:** Integrate foresight-related criteria into Seal of Good Local Governance assessments to incentivize LGUs.

Evidence from Southeast Asian governance contexts suggests that multi-level coordination enhances anticipatory capacity and reduces the likelihood of fragmented responses to systemic risks (Evans et al., 2017).

## 7.5 Policy and Fiscal Instruments

Resource allocation plays a critical role in either constraining or enabling foresight practices within LGUs. Without targeted funding, anticipatory planning initiatives often rely on ad hoc support, limiting their scope and sustainability. One effective policy instrument is the establishment of dedicated

foresight budget lines within the Annual Investment Programs (AIPs). Allocating funds specifically for foresight-related activities—such as scenario planning workshops, modeling exercises, and expert consultations—ensures that local governments have the financial resources to systematically integrate forward-looking approaches into decision-making processes.

Another important fiscal mechanism involves linking portions of national transfers, such as the National Tax Allotment (NTA), to demonstrable strategic planning outcomes. By tying funding to the adoption of long-term and evidence-based planning practices, LGUs are incentivized to prioritize foresight initiatives alongside routine compliance tasks. This approach strengthens accountability while encouraging investment in anticipatory governance tools.

Public-private and academic partnerships also offer a complementary avenue for building foresight capacity. Collaborating with universities, research institutions, and technical experts can provide access to scenario analysis, risk modeling, and other analytical support that may otherwise be unavailable at the local level. Such partnerships enhance technical expertise, reduce dependence on external ad hoc support, and promote knowledge transfer. Collectively, these policy and fiscal instruments create an enabling environment that institutionalizes foresight, strengthens local planning capacity, and ensures that LGUs are better prepared to anticipate and respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

## **7.6 Expected Outcomes**

The implementation of targeted policy and fiscal measures to strengthen foresight in LGUs is expected to yield multiple positive outcomes that enhance both governance quality and long-term development planning. First, increasing anticipatory governance capacity and policy flexibility allows local governments to move beyond reactive, short-term responses and adopt proactive strategies. By incorporating scenario analysis, risk mapping, and extended planning horizons, LGUs can better anticipate emerging social, economic, and environmental challenges, enabling more adaptive and resilient policy formulation.

Second, improved foresight can reduce mismatches in infrastructure and service delivery caused by population growth, urban expansion, and climate-related uncertainties. Planning that systematically integrates demographic projections, hazard data, and future scenarios helps align investments with anticipated needs, minimizing resource inefficiencies and enhancing service effectiveness. This approach also contributes to more sustainable urban and provincial development by reducing the likelihood of stranded assets or underutilized infrastructure.

Third, institutionalizing foresight practices can strengthen leadership continuity and preserve institutional memory. Dedicated foresight units, stable planning teams, and structured knowledge management processes allow LGUs to retain lessons from previous planning cycles, maintain strategic focus, and ensure smoother transitions during leadership changes.

Finally, these measures can foster cross-jurisdictional collaboration, improving coordination between local, regional, and national agencies. By promoting shared data systems, joint scenario exercises, and aligned investment priorities, LGUs can optimize resource allocation, enhance risk mitigation strategies, and reduce redundancy in service provision. Collectively, these outcomes support more efficient, responsive, and forward-looking governance, positioning LGUs to effectively address complex, long-term development challenges and uncertainties.

## **7.7 Recommended Actions for Region IX LGUs**

The Policy Matrix for Region IX LGUs outlines a set of recommended actions designed to strengthen foresight capacity across leadership, institutional structures, data infrastructure, intergovernmental coordination, and fiscal mechanisms. In the leadership dimension, foresight training workshops conducted by the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) and DILG IX between 2025 and

2026 aim to build strategic vision and anticipatory decision-making skills among local executives and planning staff. These initiatives directly respond to observed gaps in leadership continuity and strategic orientation, equipping officials with the tools to champion long-term planning initiatives.

Institutional recommendations focus on establishing dedicated foresight units within LGU planning offices from 2025 to 2027. Institutionalizing these units addresses the current absence of specialized structures for futures planning and ensures sustained integration of scenario analysis and risk-informed planning into local development processes. Complementing this, the development of GIS-enabled regional databases by LGUs in collaboration with the PSA and DILG from 2025 to 2028 targets fragmented data infrastructure, enhancing the availability of spatially detailed socio-economic and hazard information for evidence-based decision-making.

Intergovernmental coordination is strengthened through RDC-led foresight platforms and scenario exercises between 2025 and 2027. These mechanisms promote collaborative planning across local and regional jurisdictions, aligning priorities, and improving resource efficiency while reducing siloed decision-making. Finally, allocating foresight-specific budget lines in AIPs between 2025 and 2026 ensures financial sustainability for these initiatives, reducing reliance on ad hoc funding. Collectively, the matrix addresses the empirical findings of leadership instability, weak institutionalization, limited data capacity, and fragmented coordination, providing a comprehensive framework to enhance proactive, anticipatory governance in Region IX.

***Policy Matrix: Recommended Actions for Region IX LGUs***

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Actors</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Leadership	Foresight training workshops	DAP, DILG IX	2025–2026
Institutional	Establish foresight units in planning offices	LGU executives	2025–2027
Data Infrastructure	Develop GIS-enabled regional databases	LGUs, PSA, DILG	2025–2028
Intergovernmental Coordination	RDC foresight platforms and scenario exercises	RDC IX, LGUs	2025–2027
Fiscal & Policy	Allocate foresight budget lines in AIP	LGU budgeting offices	2025–2026

These recommendations respond directly to the empirical findings. They address leadership instability, institutional gaps, data fragmentation, and weak intergovernmental coordination.

**8. Conclusion: Implications for Local Governance and Foresight Integration**

This study highlights significant implications for local governance and the integration of futures thinking in the Zamboanga Peninsula (Region IX), Philippines. Empirical evidence indicates that multiple structural and institutional factors hinder the systematic adoption of strategic foresight. Frequent leadership turnover in provincial and city governments disrupts policy continuity, limiting the ability to pursue long-term initiatives. Compliance-driven planning frameworks further reinforce short-term, procedural approaches, while high fiscal dependence on National Tax Allotments (NTA) constrains discretionary spending for anticipatory programs. Fragmented data systems, including incomplete socio-economic databases and limited GIS integration, reduce the capacity for evidence-based scenario analysis and risk-informed planning.

Even in cases where planning horizons extend beyond statutory requirements, as observed in Zamboanga City, the application of scenario exercises, backcasting, and other foresight tools remains ad hoc and insufficiently institutionalized. The absence of dedicated foresight units across all LGUs underscores the reliance on individual executive vision rather than structured organizational processes.

This dependence makes foresight adoption vulnerable to leadership changes and limits the accumulation of institutional memory.

Overall, the findings suggest that enhancing foresight capacity requires more than formal compliance with planning regulations. Institutional reforms—such as creating dedicated foresight units, strengthening data infrastructure, and embedding anticipatory mechanisms into standard planning procedures—are necessary to sustain long-term, strategic thinking. Complementary measures, including leadership development, intergovernmental coordination, and dedicated fiscal allocations, can further support proactive governance. Strengthening these dimensions can transform local governments from reactive administrators into anticipatory, adaptive institutions capable of navigating complex social, economic, and environmental challenges.

## **8.1 Key Findings**

The key findings of this study highlight the structural and institutional challenges that constrain the adoption of strategic foresight in Region IX LGUs.

First, leadership significantly influences foresight adoption. LGUs with relatively stable leadership, such as Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga City, show modest extensions of planning horizons beyond statutory requirements. However, formal foresight exercises, including scenario analysis or backcasting, remain rare. Frequent political cycles, short executive tenures, and executive-centric decision-making limit the ability to pursue anticipatory strategies, making long-term planning vulnerable to changes in leadership and priorities.

Second, institutional integration of foresight is minimal. While Comprehensive Development Plans (CDPs) and Annual Investment Programs (AIPs) satisfy statutory mandates, they rarely include structured foresight tools. Planning offices generally lack dedicated units, staff, or processes tasked with scenario analysis or future-oriented policy assessment, leaving foresight initiatives dependent on individual champions rather than embedded institutional practices.

Third, data and knowledge systems constrain capacity. Although socio-economic and hazard data are available, integration and dynamic modeling are largely absent. GIS-enabled platforms remain concentrated in urban areas, such as Zamboanga City, limiting the use of spatial analysis and evidence-based foresight in provincial LGUs. This fragmented data infrastructure reduces the ability to conduct comprehensive risk assessment and long-term scenario planning.

Finally, intergovernmental coordination emphasizes compliance over strategic foresight. While Regional Development Council (RDC) mechanisms ensure alignment with national frameworks, they do not institutionalize forward-looking exercises or regional scenario-building initiatives. Consequently, cross-jurisdictional collaboration remains procedural rather than anticipatory, limiting opportunities for collective risk management, resource optimization, and integrated long-term planning across the region.

Collectively, these findings underscore that effective foresight integration requires a combination of stable leadership, institutionalization, robust data systems, and proactive intergovernmental coordination.

## **8.2 Policy Implications**

The findings of this study carry significant policy implications for enhancing foresight capacity in Region IX LGUs. Institutionalizing strategic foresight requires coordinated interventions across multiple governance dimensions, including leadership, organizational design, data infrastructure, and intergovernmental processes. Establishing dedicated foresight units within LGU planning offices can

create a permanent structure for futures-oriented planning, reducing reliance on individual champions and ensuring continuity despite political turnover.

Integrating scenario analysis and risk-informed methodologies into statutory plans, such as Comprehensive Development Plans (CDPs) and Annual Investment Programs (AIPs), ensures that anticipatory practices are embedded in routine decision-making rather than treated as ad hoc activities. Developing GIS-enabled socio-economic and hazard databases enhances the analytical capacity of LGUs, supporting evidence-based planning and spatially informed investment decisions.

Fostering RDC-led foresight platforms encourages cross-jurisdictional collaboration, enabling joint scenario exercises, shared data systems, and aligned development priorities across municipalities and provinces. Linking fiscal incentives, including portions of national transfers or dedicated budget lines, to demonstrable foresight adoption can motivate LGUs to institutionalize anticipatory practices.

Complementary measures, such as leadership development programs, succession planning, and knowledge retention strategies, strengthen institutional memory and ensure that lessons from previous planning cycles inform future decision-making. Collectively, these policy interventions provide a comprehensive approach to transitioning LGUs from reactive, compliance-driven governance toward proactive, adaptive, and forward-looking management capable of addressing long-term social, economic, and environmental challenges.

### **8.3 Contribution to Scholarship**

This study makes a significant contribution to the literature on local governance by offering an empirically grounded evaluation of foresight adoption in the Zamboanga Peninsula, a developing country context. Unlike much of the existing scholarship, which often emphasizes theoretical frameworks, this research provides concrete evidence on how executive leadership, institutional structures, data capacity, and fiscal resources interact to shape the extent and quality of anticipatory governance at the local level. By examining both provincial LGUs and a highly urbanized city, the study highlights variations in planning horizons, scenario use, data integration, and intergovernmental coordination, offering nuanced insights into the factors enabling or constraining foresight.

Furthermore, the findings extend the discourse on strategic foresight by linking governance capacity to observable planning outcomes, demonstrating that technical tools alone are insufficient without supportive leadership and institutional mechanisms. The study also offers comparative lessons for other Philippine regions and developing country contexts that face similar challenges, such as political turnover, compliance-driven planning, and fragmented data systems. By documenting these dynamics, the research provides a practical and theoretical foundation for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners seeking to institutionalize futures thinking and enhance long-term, adaptive local governance.

### **8.4 Limitations and Future Research**

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Its scope is confined to provincial and city governments within Region IX, excluding municipal and barangay-level governance structures. As a result, the analysis may not capture localized variations in foresight adoption or the ways in which lower-tier LGUs implement anticipatory practices within their communities. Additionally, the study primarily assesses structural, institutional, and data-related capacities, without systematically evaluating the direct impact of foresight integration on policy outcomes, service delivery, or resilience to emerging risks.

Future research could address these gaps by expanding the coverage to include municipal and barangay-level LGUs, providing a more comprehensive understanding of foresight adoption across governance tiers. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable to track changes over time, particularly in response to interventions such as the establishment of foresight units, data system enhancements, or leadership

development programs. Furthermore, examining the causal relationship between foresight practices and tangible policy outcomes—such as improved disaster preparedness, infrastructure planning, or socio-economic development—would strengthen evidence on the effectiveness of anticipatory governance. Such research can inform the design of targeted capacity-building programs and provide lessons for scaling foresight initiatives across other Philippine regions and comparable developing country contexts.

## 8.5 Conclusion

Futures thinking and strategic foresight have emerged as essential tools for adaptive governance, particularly in regions facing complex socio-economic, environmental, and demographic uncertainties. By anticipating potential risks, exploring alternative development pathways, and planning for long-term outcomes, these approaches enable local governments to respond proactively rather than reactively. In the context of Region IX, empirical evidence demonstrates that the adoption of such practices remains limited, constrained by a combination of structural, leadership, institutional, and data-related factors. Short executive tenures, compliance-driven planning frameworks, fragmented data systems, and limited intergovernmental coordination collectively hinder the systematic integration of foresight into local governance processes. Even where planning horizons extend beyond statutory requirements, as in Zamboanga City, foresight practices such as scenario analysis, backcasting, and risk-informed modeling are applied sporadically and remain dependent on individual leadership initiatives rather than institutionalized mechanisms.

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive policy interventions. Strengthening leadership capacity through targeted training and professional development programs can foster strategic vision, encourage long-term planning, and support continuity despite political turnover. Institutionalizing foresight through dedicated units within LGU planning offices ensures that anticipatory governance becomes part of routine processes, reducing dependence on individual champions and enhancing organizational memory. Improvements in data infrastructure, including GIS-enabled databases, socio-economic and hazard data integration, and dynamic modeling capabilities, provide the analytical foundation necessary for evidence-based planning and scenario building. Equally important, enhancing intergovernmental coordination through RDC-led foresight platforms promotes cross-jurisdictional collaboration, facilitates the sharing of best practices, and aligns local, regional, and national development priorities.

Fiscal mechanisms also play a critical role in enabling sustainable foresight practices. Allocating dedicated budget lines for foresight-related activities, such as workshops, modeling exercises, and technical consultations, ensures that initiatives are financially supported and insulated from short-term budgetary constraints. Linking portions of national transfers to demonstrated forward-looking planning further incentivizes LGUs to adopt and institutionalize anticipatory approaches. Public-private partnerships and collaboration with academic institutions can provide additional technical expertise and analytical capacity, reinforcing local planning processes and reducing reliance on ad hoc external support.

The successful implementation of these measures is expected to yield several tangible outcomes. LGUs can improve their policy flexibility, better align infrastructure and service delivery with projected demographic and climate uncertainties, and enhance resilience against future shocks. Institutionalized foresight strengthens knowledge retention and continuity in leadership transitions, while cross-jurisdictional coordination improves efficiency in resource allocation and risk mitigation. Collectively, these interventions can shift Region IX LGUs from compliance-driven, reactive governance toward proactive, adaptive, and strategic management.

In conclusion, integrating futures thinking and strategic foresight into local governance in Region IX is both necessary and feasible. By addressing structural, leadership, institutional, and data constraints through coordinated policy and fiscal measures, LGUs can build the capacity to anticipate and respond

to emerging challenges. Strengthened foresight practices not only improve the effectiveness and sustainability of local development planning but also position the Zamboanga Peninsula as a model for anticipatory governance in developing country contexts, enhancing long-term development outcomes, resilience, and policy coherence across the region.

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