

POLICY INFOCUS:

Just Transition to E-Trikes

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PROBLEM

The Philippines currently faces a critical challenge in its overreliance on traditional fuel-powered transport systems, particularly in conventional tricycles' design and operation. These vehicles, characterized by small and low-level sidecars, present accessibility issues for diverse user groups, including senior citizens and individuals with mobility issues. Additionally, their design makes them prone to accidents, posing safety risks for passengers and pedestrians. Furthermore, using four-stroke engines in traditional tricycles contributes to unhealthy carbon emissions, adversely impacting the environment and the health of drivers, passengers, and pedestrians (Balaria, Pascual, Santos, Ortiz, Gabriel, and Mangahas, 2017). The widespread use of tricycles in the market significantly contributes to noise, particulate matter, and pollutants, adversely impacting humans and the environment. This is exacerbated by poor vehicle maintenance, extended service life, adulterated fuel and lubricants, excessive lubricant use, and passenger overloading (Abuzo, 2005; Li, Hu, Zhou, Wei, and Cheng, 2011).

Addressing this reliance on traditional fuel-powered transport systems is imperative because a more sustainable and inclusive model is needed. E-trike adoption is sustainable in the long run in terms of economic, socio-political, and environmental impact (Balaria et al., 2017). The inherent challenges of inaccessibility, safety concerns, and ecological impact underscore the necessity of transitioning towards an electric-powered transport system. Embracing this transition offers green alternatives with reduced carbon emissions and opens doors to inclusive design that accommodates diverse user groups, increased carrying capacity, and improved passenger comfort. Moreover, the shift to electric-powered tricycles aligns with global efforts to combat climate change and positions the Philippines as a destination committed to eco-friendly tourism practices (Umali, 2018). A strategic and comprehensive initiative is required to facilitate this just transition, unlocking opportunities for a more sustainable, inclusive, and environmentally friendly transportation system in the country.

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PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- **Communications Campaign:** A comprehensive communications campaign is crucial to address the challenges posed by the reliance on traditional fuel-powered tricycles and promote the transition to electric-powered alternatives. This initiative involves crafting a targeted messaging strategy utilizing various communication channels such as public service announcements, social media, and community events. The campaign aims to raise awareness about the accessibility issues, safety concerns, and environmental impact of traditional tricycles. Simultaneously, it will highlight the benefits of electric-powered tricycles, emphasizing their inclusive design, reduced carbon emissions, and potential to enhance the overall transportation experience. Engaging the public through informative communication will garner support for the shift and encourage stakeholders to participate in the proposed changes.
- **Piloting:** A strategic piloting program can serve as a tangible and practical approach to test the feasibility and efficacy of e-trikes in specific areas. By selecting pilot locations, stakeholders can closely monitor the transition, assess the acceptance of the new transport model, and identify any challenges or adjustments needed. Piloting allows for real-time feedback from both drivers and passengers, offering insights into the practicality, accessibility, and overall performance of electric tricycles. This approach facilitates a phased implementation, ensuring a smoother transition and allowing for adjustments based on the unique dynamics of different communities. The success of the pilot programs can be used to inform and scale up the initiative across other regions.
- **City-wide Ordinance:** Implementing a city-wide ordinance that mandates the transition from traditional fuel-powered tricycles to electric-powered alternatives provides the necessary legal framework. The ordinance should outline specific timelines, incentives, and penalties to ensure a smooth and timely transition. Collaborating with local government units, transportation authorities, and relevant stakeholders is crucial in drafting and implementing this ordinance. Additionally, the ordinance can include provisions for financial incentives, tax breaks, or subsidies to encourage tricycle operators to invest in electric vehicles. Establishing a legal framework creates a cohesive and synchronized effort toward a more sustainable and inclusive transportation system at the city level.

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PROPOSED INITIATIVE

The group will conduct a comprehensive survey to gather detailed insights into the experiences, profitability, and relevant data from both traditional and electric tricycle drivers in Malabon City. This survey aims to understand the specific challenges and opportunities associated with each type of tricycle operation. The collected data will serve as a foundation for crafting an effective communications campaign tailored to the social media platforms most accessible to our target audience.

Subsequently, the initiative will organize a town hall meeting involving key stakeholders to present and discuss the project. This meeting will provide an opportunity to address concerns, garner support, and ensure transparency in the transition process. Stakeholders, including tricycle drivers, community members, and local officials, will be able to engage actively in the planning and implementation phases.

The group will propose strategically piloting electric tricycles in selected barangays to initiate the transition. This phase will involve barangay officials, development partners like the Asia Development Bank, and e-trike unit providers. The gradual transition will allow for a smooth integration, addressing any challenges that may arise while showcasing the benefits of electric tricycles.

Ultimately, the goal is to transform the pilot project into a city-wide ordinance, ensuring a comprehensive and uniform transition across Malabon City. This phased approach, supported by partnerships and community involvement, will contribute to the success and sustainability of the initiative, promoting a more environmentally friendly and efficient tricycle transportation system.

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