

Nation

Bacolod gets AIM award

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Bacolod Mayor Evelio Leonardia and city administrator Rogelio Balo (third and fourth from left, respectively) at the awarding rites of the Asian Institute of Management at the SMX Convention Center in Pasay City, with Metro Bacolod Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Roberto Montelibano, Prof. Lourdes Sereno of the AIM Policy Center, and Dr. Volker Steigerward of the German Technical Cooperation.

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MANILA, Philippines - When it rains, it pours.

The Asian Institute of Management (AIM) recently awarded Bacolod City for having the “Best [Compliance](#) with Government Mandated Plans” on the responsiveness of local government units, in line with the 2009 Philippine Cities Competitiveness Ranking Project.

The award came within a week after Bacolod was chosen as the only pilot city in the country for a European Union-funded project and Mayor Evelio Leonardia was elected executive vice president of the League of Cities of the Philippines.

AIM gave the award in collaboration with the US Agency for International [Development](#) (USAID) and the German Technological Cooperation (GTZ).

The city was recognized for its outstanding performance in the competitiveness ranking among newly classified growth centers in the country.

A major factor in the classification of growth centers is the city's ability to generate local [income](#) (weight of 60 percent) versus its population (weight of 40 percent). The figures used in the classification were based on the 2008 records of the Bureau of Local Government Finance and the 2007 census.

The recognition was presented to Leonardia and city administrator Rogelio Balo during awarding ceremonies held at the SMX Convention Center in Pasay City.

In 2006, AIM also recognized Bacolod as the “most competitive” mid-sized city in the country.

“Bacolod's being categorized as a new growth center is another validation that, indeed, the city is growing fast and surging ahead,” Leonardia said.

The other cities that were recognized as new growth centers in the country were Iloilo, Mandaue, Lapu-Lapu, Zamboanga, Cagayan de Oro, and General Santos.

The AIM-USAID-GTZ study evaluated 29 selected cities and established three new categories, namely emergent cities, growth centers, and metropolitan growth centers.

In the new classification, the assessment was based on the scientifically supportable distinction of a city's characteristics.

In the [presentation](#) of the new categories of cities, it was concluded that growth centers, including Bacolod, have higher per capita income than emergent cities and metro growth centers.

Metropolitan centers included the cities of Cebu and Davao, while the emergent cities are Dagupan, San Fernando, Santiago, Tuguegarao, Angeles, Lucena, Puerto Princesa, Naga, Legaspi, Tacloban, Ormoc, Pagadian, Iligan, Tagum, Cotabato, Butuan, and Surigao.

Since 2004 when the Leonardia administration started, Bacolod has been a recipient of numerous recognitions, both from the national government and private institutions.

Just recently, Bacolod was chosen as the only pilot city in the country for the European Union-funded project “Partnership in Democratic Local Governance in Southern Asia.”

It was also awarded as the “Most Business-Friendly City” by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and was named as the “Best Place to Live in the Country” by Money Sense Magazine.

Bacolod has also received other prestigious citations such as “Most Child-Friendly City” and has been a consistent national finalist for the “Best City Peace and Order Council” and “Best City Disaster Risk Management” awards.

Bacolod rose to the top three spots in the Top 10 Next Wave Cities for the best business process outsourcing sites in the country in the second quarter this year.

It was also cited as the “Best Tourism-Oriented LGU” in Region 6 and “Best Performing City in Economic Development,” among many other citations.