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3 cities, 4 towns 'need biz chamber'

Monday, November 2, 2009

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By Nancy R. Cudis

THE strengthening of a business chamber and the presence of more investors are some of the common concerns of three cities and four municipalities in Cebu.

These were discovered through a participatory planning approach called the Local and Regional Economic Development (LRED) for local government units and its economic stakeholders.

LRED is part of the Private Sector Promotion (Smedsep) program, a development cooperation project between the Philippines and the Federal Republic of Germany. It aims to improve the business and investment climate of the small and medium enterprises in the Philippines.

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Initially targeting provinces in the Western Visayas, Central Visayas, and Eastern Visayas, it is implemented in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

In Cebu, the DTI identified the cities of Carcar, Naga, and Bogo as well as the municipalities of Liloan, Argao, Barili, and Consolacion as participants for LRED. The government agency considered these areas as "growth centers."

Concerns

DTI Cebu started implementing the program late last year by conducting a rapid economic appraisal (REA) that involves surveys and interviews of different stakeholders in the local government, academe, church, and business community.

"Through LRED, a municipality (or city) can identify pressing concerns, address them, and hasten economic development," Elias Tecson, currently DTI Cebu officer-in-charge, told Sun.Star Cebu.

Following REA, the beneficiaries will have to focus on the five to six most important concerns and create a six-month or 12-month action plan that they will implement, with the guidance of the government's local trade department.

DTI Cebu found out that the three cities and four municipalities wanted to either create a business group or strengthen its existing chamber to fast track the growth of their micro, small, and medium enterprises.

To assist them, Tecson said they are coordinating with the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) so that these municipal business groups will be adopted by the CCCL.

The LRED participants also wanted to have more livelihood skills training, to properly manage solid wastes, and to attract more investors to their areas.

"(But) I asked them how they can invite investors if they have not developed the necessary requirements. I asked them what they can offer investors in terms of human resource, water, electricity, and other capital expenses. It is important to have capacity first before opportunity," said Tecson, who is also DTI Cebu program management chief.

As an example, he cited Bogo City whose seaport in Barangay Polambato already attracted a potential investor, domestic shipping company Negros Navigation Co. Inc. (Nenaco).

He disclosed that Bogo is now preparing to meet with executives of Nenaco this month to propose the municipality's capacity to accommodate investors.

Part of Bogo's action plan is to create an investment promotion council and a tourism development and

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promotions group to facilitate its investment and tourism sector.

Other municipalities, like Barili, Argao, and Liloan have already created business chambers and are preparing to be registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Once the LRED beneficiaries have completed their action plans, DTI Cebu will continue to monitor them to ensure sustainability of their projects.

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Weather Bulletin

Issued At: 5:00 p.m., 02 November 2009

At 2:00 p.m., today, Tropical Depression "TINO" was estimated based on satellite and surface data at 270 kms East of Tuguegarao City (17.7°N, 124.5°E) with maximum winds of 55 kph near the center. It is forecast to move West Northwest at 15 kph.

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