



# 2023 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

**Title:** “ GROWING A FOOD SUFFICIENT AND CLIMATE SMART  
AGROECOLOGICAL DESTINATION”

**Destination, Country:** Bago City, Philippines

**Submitted by:** Hon. Nicholas M. Yulo – City Mayor

**In the category:**  Destination Management     Environment & Climate     Thriving Communities  
 Nature & Scenery     Culture & Tradition     Business & Marketing

**The Story in a picture:**

One of the distinctive terrains in our agroecological destination as the “**Rice Granary of Negros Occidental**” in the Philippines. These iconic verdant terraces of upland rice and other vegetations are the fruits of the labour of our farmers from the Mailum Organic Village Association. The biggest farming community in our destination practicing sustainable and climate adaptive agriculture in the highlands through the support and guidance of the City Government of Bago.



**Summary:**

Bago City in the Philippines is the “Rice Granary of Negros Occidental”. Our majestic biodiversity nurtured by a multitude of farming villages ensure the food security of the city and the Negros Island. Our farmers and fisherfolks are the backbone of our progress and development. Located in one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world, it is a yearly goal of our destination to pursue the vision that Bagonhon farmers will soon no longer become susceptible to extreme climatic conditions. That they will be ready to face these challenges by transitioning to a more resilient, regenerative and climate change adaptive agriculture that would breed a food sufficient agroecological destination.





## 2023 TOP 100

### GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Years ago, the agricultural system in our locale was not cohesively updated and have a lot of grey areas. Through organizing our farmers and fisherfolks into community-based organizations, the gaps were gradually closed and our agroecological struggles eased. Farmers education became one of the keys that shifted the paradigm from conventional to “Climate Smart Agriculture”. Government support in terms of agricultural development programs, technology and finance boosted up our farmers’ confidence in making progress to fully embrace sustainable and regenerative farming, further making agriculture the number one industry in our city.

With this and parallel to a climate resilient agricultural system, our Local Government was able to establish a strong Food Security Program. This has been one of the elements that had weathered Bago City through food sufficiency challenges especially during the COVID 19 pandemic. Our destination is a Hall of Fame awardee in the “Rice Awards” of the Philippines in recognition of the increase in its annual yield of rice production from 119,528.36 MT in 2018 to 123,048.01 MT in 2019. Rice is the staple food of Filipinos.

By growing a food sufficient and climate smart destination many more of our diverse natural bounties thrived robustly and our farming communities flourished with vigor. In our rich soils and waters are extraordinary food biodiversity like the Ark of Taste’s “Criollo Cacao” and the “Bago River Eel”. Our heirloom variety Criollo Cacao was declared as a Gold Winner in the 2021 International Cocoa Awards in Paris, France. Bago City also produce export quality muscovado sugar, rhum, indigenous crafts and silk from silkworm. With these premiums, our farms and farmers are now regenerated with the enthusiasm and determination to advance Bago City as a “booming green Agroecological Destination and the Food Basket of the Negros Island”.



## Good Practice Story:

### Destination description

#### *Brief background of the destination.*

Bago City, an agroecological destination in the southern part of the island of Negros in the Philippines. It encompasses 40,120.00 hectares of land mostly endowed with vast and long stretch of rolling plains-carpeted with rice, sugarcane, corn, coconut, fruit trees and other high value crops. Its enchanting mountains filled with diverse flora and fauna provide a splendid scenery of the majestic Mt. Kanlaon and nurture the recharge area of the Bago Watershed. This ecotourism haven placed third in last year's Environment and Climate category of the Green Destinations Story Awards 2023 in ITB Berlin.

It is 21.5 kilometers from the Center of Bacolod, the capital of the Province of Negros Occidental or a 30 minute drive going south; an hour drive from Bacolod- Silay Airport and a 15 minute drive from the Port of Pulupandan.

A part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Site in the Philippines that forms the Coastal Greenbelt Zone of Negros Occidental (the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands and Aquatic Management Alliance), a wetland of international importance. Likewise, an East Asian Australasian Flyway of migratory birds. Its Marine Protected Area is one of the only three estuaries in the country of the critically endangered Irrawaddy Dolphins. This “flagship species” of the destination is considered a determinant of its rich water resources since what it requires from its habitat effectively reflects the health of the ecosystem for other species as well as humans.

In gastronomy, the city has placed its mark in the chocolate map of the world when its Cacao Farmer Christopher Fadriga won Gold with his heirloom Criollo Cacao beans in the International Cocoa Awards 2021 in Paris, France. Criollo Cacao is registered in the Ark of Taste of Slow Food's Foundation for Biodiversity. Otherwise known as “Theobroma cacao” or the food of the Gods. It is the rarest and finest of all the cacao beans of the world making up just 0.01% of all the cacao grown worldwide-. Likewise, a native species of the giant mottled eel that is found in the Bago River is likewise importantly catalogued in the Ark of Taste showing the extraordinary food biodiversity in our destination.

The locals of Bago, the “Bagonhons” exudes the Filipino brand of warm hospitality. Our valiant and ingenious forebears toppled down 300 years of Spanish tyranny in Negros through a “historical bluff”. A breeding ground of socio-political icons like the first head of the United Nations Population Fund -Rafael M. Salas and Asia's Best Female Chef of 2016 – Margarita Fores. Bago City is also tagged as the “Boxing Capital of the Philippines” having produced a great number of internationally – awarded champions in the field of boxing like Mansueto Velasco, Roel Velasco, King Arthur Villanueva and many more. Of recent time, it is the seat of a stable leadership, of good governance, of acclaimed socio-economic and political programs that make the city a highly regarded local government in the Western Visayas Region of the Philippines. Further bestowed with a “Seal of Good Local Governance” in the country.

### Issues faced

#### *Problems/issues solved with the Good Practice Story.*

Bago City's agricultural land area comprises the 33,205.75 hectares of the 40,120.00 hectares of its total land area. We have a 15 kilometer well – protected coastline and 1,100 hectares of water area. Several years ago, climatized agricultural development and systems were not yet institutionalized in our destination. As an offshoot, there was a multitude of challenges in our agriculture sector that posed significant risks for our **Planet, People and Prosperity**.

#### **For the Planet:**

Years before the strong institutionalization of agriculture in our city, farmers and farms are very susceptible to the effects of climate change and at times also became the contributor to the same. Environmental degradation, extreme weather condition, pollution, insufficient water supply, poor

quality seeds, pest infestation, health hazard and natural calamities are the enemies of crops, vegetations and most especially of our farmers. These lowers the yield of their crops and causes many forms of damages and financial problems which in turn have a ripple effect on their livelihood and the economic situation of the community. Such are likewise big threats to agricultural and all kinds of ecosystems that are habitats of the earth's biodiversity.

#### **For the People:**

For the farmers and the farming community, big issues (internal and external) due to an underdeveloped agricultural system burdened them like these external Factors :1.Non- membership in Farmers Associations/ Cooperatives – that caused them the lack of organizational empowerment and support, 2. Land Ownership – most of our farmers are not the owners of their landholdings. Some are agrarian reform beneficiaries wherein most are still awaiting for the issuance of their certificate of land ownership. This process usually takes time and is challenged as well with many legal issues, 3. Capacity Development – there is a gap for farmers in handling their farms since they lack in capacity inputs and education for farm management and 4. Machineries & Equipment – the lack of machineries and equipment and technical support also hampers the productivity of their farms leaving them dependent still on labor-intensive practices.

Meanwhile, there are also internal factors that greatly affect our farmers and farming communities. Topmost on this is the farmer's "Traditional Mindset" that brings about many issues hampering further their progress and abilities to tap into opportunities. This mindset is usually characterized by their being not market -driven, their lack of self-confidence and decision-making skills. In this changing rural environment, farmer and pastoralist communities alike need to be able to adapt, innovate, connect and respond. The "Capacity to Adapt" would enable farmers to become or remain self-reliant, make sustainable use of ecosystem services, and adjust to dynamic markets.

#### **Prosperity/Businesses & Income**

In terms of the profitability of farming as a business, many elements affect production and the generation of income of our farmers, like their accessibility to markets, availability and sufficiency of distribution channels, financial literacy and their susceptibility to loan sharks. This aspect is very much relative to the "People" element, of the problems and issues in farming and agriculture.

#### **Methods, steps, and tools applied**

*Solutions implemented to address the sustainability problems or issues.*

One of the great visions of Bago City is to become the leading Agroecological Destination and the Food Basket of the Negros Island. This can only be achieved if concerted efforts toward Food Security and Climate Adaptive Agriculture will be strengthened. Appropriate solutions are provided through programs, projects and activities that are instituted and spearheaded by our City Government. The purpose is to eradicate the undesirable effects of the identified issues and problems to our Planet, People and Prosperity. These solutions are as follows;

#### **Solutions for our Planet:**

- **Agricultural Development Programs on Food Security were implemented by the City Government of Bago through the City Food Security Plan, to wit;**

#### **Rice Development Program**

Bago City established a solid Rice Development Program as the biggest rice producer in the province and the region with 262.62% Rice Sufficiency level. A Hall of Fame Awardee in the annual Rice Awards, having topped the Rice Competitiveness Program of the national government from 2017, 2018 and 2019. With this we are able to access assistance from the national government through the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund wherein 15,337 farmers benefited. Undertakings under our Rice Development Program are the provision of high quality palay seeds, farmers' access to water and irrigation system and facilities, farm machineries and equipment, and production and postharvest facilities, the establishment of two rice model farms for inbred and hybrid

rice, putting up a biocontrol agent lab, and the conduct the farmers field schools and pest management training among others.

### High Value Crops Development Program

Bago City is primarily an Agricultural City having fertile volcanic soil and networks of creeks and rivers that can be used as source of continuous water supply. These attributes became ideal for our city in undertaking a program for the development of high value crops. Methods such as distribution of seedlings, installation of rain shelters and screen houses, and re-establishment of the “Gulayan Project” or communal gardens are some of the initiatives done under this program to sustain and increase the quality of crops. Through this, in calendar year 2022, 59 Farmers Associations were able to benefit and the total of distributed seeds and planting materials amounted to; 2,500 banana plantlets, 3,000 coffee seedlings, 5,930 assorted vegetable seeds and 50 kilograms mung beans. Three (3) Units Green Houses and four (4) Units Rain Shelter were likewise installed. We have also established three (3) communal garden sites through this program.

### Fisheries Development Project

This project was developed with these fundamental goals; to rehabilitate the coral reefs and protect our local Greenbelt Zone from the illegal fishing activities that harm and damage our marine natural resources. The programs that are initiated under this project are the Artificial Reef Project, Mangrove Reforestation, Declaration of Marine Sanctuary, the registration of boats and fisherfolks permit to operate, livelihood support program and provision of fishing gears and equipment to our city’s fisherfolks. 5 Fisherfolk Associations and 125 fishing vessel owners have benefitted from the program last 2022. We have also strengthened our Coastal Resource Management System through various initiatives and collaborations from the local fisherfolks, our various agencies like the City Environment Office, Office of the City Agriculture, Tourism Affairs Office together with the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands and Aquatic Management Alliance, the University of St. La Salle and other Non-Government Organizations and Private Establishments. Through these partnerships and collaboration, we are able to monitor and sustain the ecosystems in our Marine Protected Area especially dedicated to our flagship species, the Irrawaddy Dolphins.

### Organic Agriculture

As an agroecological destination, we aligned our program and projects to the Organic Agriculture Act of 2010/2021” or Republic Act 10068/11511 to promote, propagate, develop further, and implement organic agriculture in the city. Our City Council also passed a Resolution Ordinance No. 13-06 institutionalizing, promoting, and developing organic agriculture in the City of Bago, providing funds therefore, and for other purposes. Through this our city procured organic fertilizer, Sticky Trap Attractant, Microbial Inoculant, Foliar Fertilizer, Trichoderma, Bacillus thuringiensis, Organic Pesticide, Molasses, Fruit Fly Trapper with Methyl Eugenol, Seedling Tray ST 104 holes, Planting Tray (Seedbox), Polyethylene Seedling Bags, UV-Treated PE Film, PE Mulching Film, Soil pH meter, and moisture meter. This project, encouraged adjacent farmers to promote organic agriculture through ecologically sound, socially acceptable, economically viable, and technically feasible production of food. This is also a strategy to encourage the young generation and health conscious to go into organic farming and likewise to establish their farm tourism site.

### Corn Development Project

The Corn Seed Subsidy Project was created to support the livelihood project of small corn growers by increasing their farm productivity and farmers’ profitability. The City acquired hybrid seeds for distribution to corn farmers for this endeavor that helped 45 small corn farmers coming from three (3) associations.

- **Integrated Ecosystem Management “Revival of the Majestic Diversity of Bago Watershed”**

This best practice was internationally recognized just last March 2023 in the ITB Berlin as 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner in the Environment and Climate Category of the Green Destinations Story Awards. One of the trailblazing initiatives of our destination is to protect, conserve and rehabilitate our watershed

by mobilizing resources and strengthening community involvement through the **Ridge to Reef Environmental Management or the Integrated Ecosystem Management Approach** that involves; Agroforestry, Forest Law Enforcement, Assisted Natural Regeneration in Mt. Kanlaon Natural Park, Regulation of Quarry and Mining Activities, Waste Management and Pollution Control, Coastal Protection, Awareness Campaign on Environmental Protection and Capacity Development for Stakeholders. The Integrated Ecosystem Management Approach involves a city-wide program.

- **Agroforestry**

Our city implemented the Multi-partite Ecologically Balanced Sustainable Agro-Forestry Project (MEBSAP) which sought to establish a 100 hectare plantation of Kakawati (madre de cacao) and Cassia Spectabilis in Barangays Ilijan and Mailum. This plantation will integrate crops like "udyong" or wild grass for broom making, coffee, cacao and black pepper for its expansion in the near future. Through this program we are targeting to increase the forest cover of the Bago watershed while providing sustainable sources of income, livelihood, subsistence needs and support services to forest occupants. This was initiated by the City Environment Management Office in 2015 and is still ongoing with an expansion of areas in other "barangays" (villages), planted other high – value crops like cacao and coffee and converted more "extractors" to "protectors". Likewise, this is also complemented by the Office of the City Agriculture with the Nursery Development Program. The intended plan of the program is to aid in reforestation through the propagation, distribution of fruit and forest seedlings.

**Solutions for our People:**

Sustainable food, agriculture and rural development are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – and a key to achievement of that agenda will be an approach that empowers rural people as agents of change (FAO, 2017a; UN, 2018). It is with this that Bago City heightened the role of our farmers and fisherfolks as the backbone of progress, thus implementing programs, projects and activities for their alleviation which includes;

- **Climate-Smart Season Long Farmers Field School for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture**

The Climate Smart Season-long Farmers' Field School aims to enhance our farmers and fisherfolks knowledge, attitudes and skills on climate-smart production technologies through science-based and informed decision-making that considers agro-ecosystem and climatic factors and to conduct collective and collaborative inquiry as community problem-solving initiative. Furthermore, it will ultimately improve the productivity and profitability of small farmers in the crops of focus. This is achieved while imparting climate- smart agriculture production technologies to adapt and mitigate the effect of climate change. Herein, the agro-ecosystem analysis is explained as a field diagnostic tool in implementing farm decisions for the optimum growth and yield of crops. There is also the demonstration of skills from crop establishment, cultural management, harvest and postharvest handling, processing and utilization, up to the marketing of farm produce. And at the end of the course, our farmers and fisherfolks are now able compare the socio-economic importance of growing their crops using comparative production management system.

- **Agricultural Extension & Education Programs**

The Office of the City Agriculture continuously conducts orientation to our farmers and fisherfolks to capacitate them and to reverse their traditional mindset. A lot of projects and activities are conducted under this to benefit our farmers and fisherfolks, like the rice crop manager training, short duration and season long trainings, and organic vegetable production seminar to boost our farmers and fisherfolks knowledge in agriculture. Technical assistance is one significant element also of this program in order to provide our farmers access on updated information, technology and recommendations to the problems that they have and will encounter.

- **Organization and Strengthening of Civil Society and People’s Organization**

As facilitated by the Office of the City Agriculture, we organized the registration of farmers and fisherfolks communities to streamline their concern and ease their linkages to other connected agencies. Most importantly, this is for them to gain access on essential services from the government. Along with this program is the provision of technical and community organizing assistance. Presently we have organized eighty-two (82) Farmers Associations and seven (7) Fisherfolks Communities in Bago City. There are 11,395 farmers and 1,030 fisherfolks in Bago City.

- **Farmers’ Day Celebration**

As one of the highlights during the Charter Anniversary Celebration of Bago City every February, a Farmers’ Day is held. This one-day activity aims to showcase the skills of our farmers and fisher folks in different areas. This is also a venue for the recognition of our outstanding farmers, fisherfolks and Agricultural Extension Workers who had given their exemplary performance in the field of agriculture. A way for our City Government to give tribute to the strong backbone of our economy- our farmers and fisherfolks.

**Solutions for our Prosperity:**

- **Agritourism**

Agritourism or Farm Tourism is dubbed by the Department of Tourism of the Philippines as a “harvest of opportunities”. Our Tourism Affairs Office in collaboration with our Office of the City Agriculture introduced Farm Tourism as another opportunity in our destination that can augment the income of our farmers and farming. After mapping out and assessing farm sites and agritourism potentials, we had worked on developing the capacities of our farm owners and workers and onsite preparations for possible farm activities and experiences that we will offer to tourists. We started introducing this sustainable and low carbon tourism offering to tour operators and travel agents since 2018. Now, it has steadily picked up and Bago City now became well-known for its “Booming GREEN Agritourism”. The circuit includes OISCA Sericulture Farm or Silk Farm, Grace Farm- an organic rice farm, Chris Fadriga Cacao Plantation – for the award winning and Ark of Taste Criollo Cacao, the Mailum Organic Village Association – a highland organic demo farm, RMD Agritourism – an agricultural learning site offering short courses on Organic Agriculture, Lunao Coffee Farm- a highland coffee plantation and the Negros First Organic Technology Center – where the largest Rice Processing Center is located and it is also a learning site that is owned and operated by the Provincial Government of Negros Occidental.

- **Marketing Assistance & Product Promotion- Farmers Weekend Market and Gastronomy Tourism**

The Office of the City of Agriculture in coordination with the City Tourism Affairs Office participated yearly in province-wide and nationwide trade and selling missions, like the Panaad Sa Negros Festival, Negros Island Organization Farmers Festival, Metro Bacolod Chamber of Commerce and Industry Trade Fair, the Negros Trade Fair in Manila among others. During the pandemic, our city was able to introduce another marketing and distribution channel innovation for our farm products through - the Farmers Weekend Market. A “Farm to Park” experiential tourism that introduced to the community the practice of locavorism and gives way to Slow Food Movement. Through this, our weekend market evolved from just being an enterprising activity to a “cause” that will help enrich and preserve the Bagonhon’s gastronomic culture and lower our communities’ carbon footprint.

- **Livelihood Support Project for Farmers & Fisher Folks**

In this agricultural undertaking we have provided our farming and fishing communities with various livelihood equipment and seed capital. The members who availed of the project will pay the corresponding amount to the association for the purpose that the next recipient can avail of the program. The organization is equally responsible for the operation and maintenance incurred through this program.

- **Crop Protection Program**

The program is beneficial to farmers for future catastrophe, our Office of the City Agriculture conducted damage appraisal of farms or crops affected during calamities to assess the damages for available assistance. This also involves field monitoring for weekly data gathering of the pest and disease infestation status of the area and encourage farmers to enroll in crop insurance program.

### Key success factors

*Critical elements that led to successfully solving the issues.*

**These factors ensure that our destination will continue to be food sufficient and climate resilient in the years to come.**

- **Sustainability of the Program**

For our destination to sustain this good practice, we had formulated a City Food Security Plan that will serve as our compass in our undertakings. Through our local agriculture office we have also imposed measures on the adherence to the Philippine Agricultural Standards, Good Agricultural Practices and Good Manufacturing Practices regulations and guidelines. Most importantly, in the local government level, through Good Governance and Political Administration – our Local Government Unit executed ordinances pursuant to National Laws as follows; 1. Organic Agriculture Ordinance, 2. Marine Protected Area for Angel Wings and Irrawaddy Dolphins/Fishery Reserve Ordinance, 3. Comprehensive Land Use and Zoning Ordinance, 4. City Tourism Code, 5. City Environment Code, 6. City Solid Waste Management Ordinance and 7. Ordinance Regulating Single -Use Plastic.

- **Effective Capacity Development Programs , Community Involvement and Stakeholders Support**

As the most important resource, the human resource, with knowledge, education, capacity development and other social involvements being identified as gaps and issues to work on. Our local government agencies facilitated and conducted Capacity Development and Empowerment Activities to update the databank and skills of our farmers and fisherfolks and their respective communities. Below are several major undertaking that we had worked on to benefit our Planet, People and Prosperity, to wit;

<b>Capacity Development &amp; Empowerment Activities</b>	<b>Stakeholders and Communities</b>
Agricultural Extension Programs	Farmers Associations, Barangay Officials, Local Government Unit, Agricultural Extension Workers
Agritourism Program	Farmers, Farmers Associations, Department of Tourism, Department of Agriculture, Barangay Officials, Local Government Unit
Planting for Productivity	Ayala Foundation Incorporated, Barangays, Local Government Unit, Farmers Association
Product Labeling & Food Safety	DOST, Barangays, Local Government Unit, Farmers Association
Pangabuhian sa Kapehan (Coffee Livelihood Project)	Carlos Hilado Memorial State University, Barangays, Local Government Unit, Farmers Association, Bago City Federation of Coffee Growers
Shared Service Facilities	DTI, Barangays, Local Government Unit, Farmers Association
Season Long Farmers Field School	MBA Forest Technical School, Agricultural Training Institute, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Barangays, Local Government Unit, Farmers Association
Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund	Department of Agriculture, Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), Landbank of the Philippines, Philippine Center for Post Harvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech), Development Bank of the Philippines, Agricultural Training Institute, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Local Government Unit and Farmers Association
Livelihood Support for Fisherfolks	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Local Government Unit, Fisherfolks Associations



Farm Mechanizations	Department of Agriculture, Province of Negros Occidental, Local Government Unit, Philippine Center for Post Harvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech), Farmers Associations
Irrigation Management Program	National Irrigation Administration, Local Government Unit, Irrigators Association
Organic Agriculture Development Program	Bureau of Soils and Water Management, National Organic Agriculture Program, Local Government Unit, Farmers Association
Inland Aquaculture	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Local Government Unit, Fisherfolks Associations
Multi-Partite Ecologically Balanced Sustainable Agro-Forestry Project (MEBSAP)	Upland farmer-beneficiaries/Local Government Unit/Civil Society Organizations
P4WatEr or the Partnership for Water and Economic Resilience and USAID Safe Water Project	Coca Cola Foundation Philippines through its Agos Program in partnership with USAID Safe Water Project and implemented by Multi-Sectoral Alliance for Development Negros
Mangrove Reforestation Activities	Local Government Unit, National Government Agencies, Civil Society Organizations, Academe, Religious Groups, Business Groups
The Sustainability of Marine Protected Areas for Irrawaddy Dolphins in the Coastal Areas of Bago City and Pulupandan	Center for Research and Engagement- University of St. La Salle, Local Government Unit, Bago City College, Local Fisherfolks of Bago City and Pulupandan
Bago River Water Quality Monitoring	Environment Management Bureau, Local Government Unit, Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, Non-Government Organizations, Business Sectors
Project Presentation and Orientation for Multi-Partite Ecologically Balanced Sustainable Agro-Forestry Project (MEBSAP) Beneficiaries	Upland Barangay Officials and Farmer- Beneficiaries , Local Government Unit, Farmers Association
Community-Based Information and Education Campaign on Environment, Agriculture, Tourism and Trade	Local Residents, Barangay Officials , Local Government Unit, Farmers and Fisherfolks Association

- **Sound Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Control of the Programs**

Organizational efficiency and systematic completion and continuance of the programs are also very significant in the success of this good practice. Our city has installed systems that would guarantee the soundness of each plan up to its successful realization. Quarterly, we have a City Development Council Meeting where we tackle all programs, issues and requisites that our destination needs to work on to achieve its annual goals and to fulfil our Mission “to improve the quality of life of every Bagonhon through sustainable development and good governance”.

- **Recognition and Rewards System**

By giving recognition and incentives to reward the efforts of our farmers and fisherfolks, we compel their cooperation and sustain their enthusiasm for the program, through;

- Annual Farmers & Fisherfolks Day
- Nomination of Awardees to Provincial and National Agricultural Awards
- Incentives and Awards System for Farmers, Tourism Stakeholders, Environment Governance Stakeholders, Academe, Business Sector and Barangays

## Lessons learned

*Challenges faced while implementing the Good Practice and their solutions.*

“Growing a Food Sufficient and Climate Smart Agroecological Destination” is a tedious process that requires steadfast political will, good governance and strong support from the community and stakeholders. Starting it with a plan makes the journey systematic. These are the lessons that we learned along our implementation when we had set this direction last 2016 to achieve our goal for Bago City to become “a leading Agroecological Destination and the Food Basket of the Negros Island”.

Additionally, to get optimum results for our targets and objectives for this program, we learned that we should first organize and capacitate the community and stakeholders. Dealing with individual farmers is time-consuming. Before we had organized and registered our farmers associations, we had wasted a lot of time and effort to cater to the needs of individual farmers and

fisherfolks. Organizing the community solved a lot of critical issues and advanced the welfare of the farming villages in a much cohesive way through the various trainings and assistance that they were able to avail as a community.

Lastly, to be “Climate- Smart” is to be resilient especially in your logistics and mitigation measures. In acknowledging the power of nature in our climate vulnerable country, we are able to appreciate the beauty of installing climatized mitigation measures for our farms, our farmers and their agroecological enterprises and services. And all of these became our stepping stones in transforming Bago City to a Food Sufficient and Climate Smart Agroecological Destination.

## Achievements and Results

*Direct and indirect results of the Good Practice.*

By “Growing a Food Sufficient and Climate Smart Agroecological Destination, Bago City was able to reach these heights;

### **ACHIEVEMENTS ON SUSTAINABILITY**

- International Recognition –  
Third Place Green Destinations Story Awards 2023 in Environment & Climate Category  
Gold Award in the International Cocoa Awards of 2021 for the heirloom Criollo Cacao Beans of Cacao Farmer Christopher Fadriga
- National Recognition –  
Hall of Fame Rice Awardee from 2017, 2018 and 2019 with 262.62% Rice Sufficiency Level

### **FARMER AWARDEES and EMPOWERED FARMERS PRACTICING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

- **Pastor Jerry A. Dionson** - 2016 National Organic Agriculture Achievers Award as Outstanding Small Farmer in the Individual Category ,13th National Organic Agriculture Congress
- **Christopher Fadriga** – GOLD AWARD in the 2021 International Cocoa Awards in Paris, France.
- **Renato A. Catiempo** – GAWAD SAKA Bago City, Negros Occidental Regional Outstanding Organic Agriculture Farmer.
- **Rodolfo V. Lovino** - GAWAD SAKA Bago City, Negros Occidental Regional Outstanding Fisherfolk-Fish Capture Category (*National Finalist*), Pasidungog sa Mangunguma kag Mangigisda 2019 Provincial Outstanding Fisherfolk/Fisherman
- **Evelio Lobrido**- Pasidungog sa Mangunguma kag Mangigisda 2019 Provincial Outstanding Fisherfolk/Fisherman
- **Myrna P. Villa** - Pasidungog sa Mangunguma kag Mangigisda 2019 Provincial Outstanding Small Farmer Organization Newton Camingawan Para Farmers Association (NECAPA)  
-Pasidungog sa Mangunguma kag Mangigisda 2018 Provincial Outstanding Negros First Universal Crop Insurance Program Farmer  
-1st Runner Up Outstanding Woman Leader of an Agricultural Organization  
to the Recognition for Women in Agriculture and Rural Development (REWARD) by the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist
- **Aquino Diamante**- Pasidungog sa Mangunguma kag Mangigisda 2019 Provincial Outstanding Bangus Fisherfolk/Fisherman
- **Ana Maria Braza**- Pasidungog sa Mangunguma kag Mangigisda 2019 Provincial Outstanding Rural Improvement Club (RIC) Rural Woman
- **Lee S. Apla-on**- Pasidungog sa Mangunguma kag Mangigisda 2017 Outstanding High-Value Crops Farmer-Vegetable Category
- **Penita B. Calsado**- Outstanding Farmer for High-Value Crops 2018 Outstanding High-Value Crops Farmer-Vegetable Category- Vegetable Category
- **Butz D. Buerom**- 2022 Best Organic Farmer Practitioner in the 15th Negros Island Organic Farmers’ Festival ~2019 Best Free-Range Chicken Raiser 14th Negros Island Organic Farmers’ Festival
- **Gina P. Dela Rosa**- 2019 Best Organic Agri-preneur 14th Negros Island Organic Farmers’ Festival
- **Maria Gina P. Banowski**-1st Runner Up Outstanding Woman Engaged in Agriculture to the Recognition for Women in Agriculture and Rural Development (REWARD) by the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist

### **RESULTS**

- Organized eighty-two (82) Farmers Associations and seven (7) Fisherfolks Communities. Capacitated and empowered 11,395 farmers and 1,030 fisherfolks in Bago City.
- Inclusion in the Ark of Taste of 2 Extraordinary Food Biodiversity of Bago – the Criollo Cacao and the Bago River Eel.
- Increased in the yield of rice production from 114,121 metric tons in CY 2017 to 119,528.36 metric tons in CY 2018 and 123,048.01 metric tons production in 2019 which earned the City the recognition as the Rice Granary of Western Visayas in the Rice Achiever’s Award from the Department of Agriculture.

- About 300 farmer - beneficiaries and their families availed of the Multi-Partite Ecologically Balanced Sustainable Agro-Forestry Project (MEBSAP) which provided upland communities an environmentally- sustainable livelihood and better income and converted them from “extractors” to “protectors”, saving the remaining forest of Mount Kanlaon.
- 179 Hectares of upland farms were converted into sustainable agro-forestry areas, increasing the City’s forest cover.
- Protection of its Marine Wildlife and Biodiversity especially the Irrawaddy Dolphin. The City was included in the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area or Greenbelt Zone, in which Bago City is an active member, was declared as the 7<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Site (Wetland of International Importance) in the Philippines.
- Proliferation of Agritourism, Department of Tourism Accredited Farm Sites and Organic Agriculture Learning Centers.
- World-class and export quality agro-industrial products –  
Sericulture Farm and the Negros Silk Project by OISCA Training Center  
Tumandok Crafts Industries  
Herbanext Laboratories (Herbal Medicines)  
Altertrade Mascobado Sugar  
Don Papa Rhum
- International partnerships in agricultural development, environmental conservation and tourism creating linkages with USAID and other international organizations,

### Tips for other destinations

*Your suggestions or recommendations for other destinations facing the same issues or implementing similar solutions*

Our efforts for food security and climate resiliency in agroecology and tourism can easily be replicated and followed by other destinations who are on the same path with us. Our tips;

- Develop solutions always by sequentially prioritizing **Planet, People and Prosperity/Profit**. By keeping in mind in all undertakings the main elements of sustainable development, we can never go wrong. The “Triple Bottom Line” is a guiding hand that would steer Governments and Destination Management Organizations in helping regenerate mother earth.
- **Ensure sustainability with iron-clad standards and regulations.** Coupled with the right regulations and standards requirements, DMOs can always put a check and balance on programs, projects and activities. It is a strategy for quality control on a destination’s products and services.
- **Empower stakeholders and communities.** The most important resource of a destination is its “human resource”. And an “empowered human resource” is one of the essentials in the success of an organization and community.
- Instill the “pride of place”. **“Pride of Place through Community-Involvement”** – in order to encourage involvement and empowerment, we introduced various Customized Capacity Development Programs and well thought of Community Based Activities that are designed to develop the community’s “pride of place”. Their strong commitment and conviction of ensuring food sufficiency and climate smart agriculture is one of the keys to sustain the lives of Bagonhons of the present generation and of the future generations.

### Recognitions and Additional references

*Recognitions and awards the Good Practice received and supporting evidence.*

- International Recognitions –  
Third Place Green Destinations Story Awards 2023 in Environment & Climate Category  
Gold Award in the International Cocoa Awards of 2021 for the heirloom Criollo Cacao Beans of Cacao Farmer Christopher Fadriga
- National and Local Recognitions –  
Hall of Fame Rice Awardee from 2017, 2018 and 2019 with 262.62% Rice Sufficiency Level  
Outstanding and Empowered Farmers and Fisherfolks  
(refer to Achievements and Results – Farmer Awardee portion)

Additional References (Weblinks):

Internationals Recognitions

[Green Destinations Story Awards 2023- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Environment & Climate](#)

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### National and Regional Agriculture Recognitions

[https://visayandaily.com/bago-city-government-reaps-awards/?fbclid=IwAR2wFMUWnRyMnGrUsUfiCMDME64ugnSHzfnlMxMYSBAsyruS\\_zCacXFOmQ](https://visayandaily.com/bago-city-government-reaps-awards/?fbclid=IwAR2wFMUWnRyMnGrUsUfiCMDME64ugnSHzfnlMxMYSBAsyruS_zCacXFOmQ)

<https://www.agriculture.com.ph/2019/06/07/bago-city-the-rice-granary-of-negros-occidental-awarded-as-top-rice-producing-city-in-western-visayas/?fbclid=IwAR27PBz9vgKe7XDsp7o7xK53GsiUk5ASvcc73XwZcE-vKpZDnVHrnCf6zDo>

[https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1369715/negros-occidental-bago-city-awarded-for-being-western-visayas-top-rice-producers-in-2019?fbclid=IwAR1IIwgHob27XWoD6ZgudJEPK7BF1M\\_3gB8p7jc6U7\\_uEL8IsZLZcb1IHs](https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1369715/negros-occidental-bago-city-awarded-for-being-western-visayas-top-rice-producers-in-2019?fbclid=IwAR1IIwgHob27XWoD6ZgudJEPK7BF1M_3gB8p7jc6U7_uEL8IsZLZcb1IHs)

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[greendestinations.org](https://greendestinations.org)



[green-destinations](https://www.linkedin.com/company/green-destinations)