

NATIONAL ECOTOURISM STRATEGY

Prepared by the

NATIONAL ECOTOURISM STEERING COMMITTEE

and

ECOTOURISM TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

through the

NEW ZEALAND OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

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Message

Globally, the 1992 Earth Summit has compelled all nations to draw action plans to implement the Global Agenda 21.

The Philippine Agenda 21 (PA 21) was adopted in September 1997 to expand the national agenda on sustainable development. Sustainable development is defined in PA 21 as the “harmonious integration of a sound and viable economy, responsive governance, social cohesion and ecological integrity to ensure that development is a life enhancing process.” This concept translated a development paradigm that looks very closely into relationship of environment and biological diversity at all levels, industry and tourism. In the context of conservation, the environment provides the wealth of wonders for the development of tourism and ecotourism in particular.

In this case, we have to be guided by the concept of ecotourism adopted in the Bohol Congress in 1999, “a form of sustainable tourism within a natural and cultural heritage area where community participation, protection and management of natural resources, culture and indigenous knowledge and practices, environmental education and ethics, as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host communities and the satisfaction of visitors.”

The Executive Order No. 111 establishing the guidelines for the development of ecotourism in the Philippines provided the legal framework for the partnership of Department of Tourism and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in cooperation with other concerned stakeholders. The EO required the formulation of the Philippine National Ecotourism Strategy to provide the framework for sustainable ecotourism development.

This Strategy is the Philippines contribution to the celebration of 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism. The UN declaration of IYE was spearheaded by the Department of Tourism. Hopefully this Strategy will serve as a guide to planners, developers, decision-makers, public and private entrepreneurs and the academe as well as government and non-governmental organizations including donors working on sustainable tourism development.

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Message

Ecotourism is a significant tool in sustainable development as it also advocates protection of our natural resources, the base from which the ecotourism industry thrives. Ecotourism seeks to put in place mechanisms that are environmentally-sustainable, economically-viable, and socially-equitable in order to bring about development in the country that would redound to the benefit of local communities, especially the poor and marginalized sectors of society.

To promote sustainable development in the Philippines, the National Ecotourism Steering Committee and the Regional Ecotourism Commitees, in consultation with the regional stakeholders, have formulated a strategy for the development of ecotourism throughout the country. The National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) is envisioned to provide an integrated and coordinated mechanisms as it provides for partnerships among the government, the private sector, the local communities and tourists to ensure the industry's viability and competitiveness in the long run.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), as one of the Department of Tourism's (DOT) partners in implementing the NES, commits its roles and mandates in the promotion of the National Ecotourism Programs. The DENR shall continue its campaign on environmental advocacy so that Filipinos and all ecotourism enthusiasts may gain deeper appreciation of the value of biodiversity and of the benefits that can be realized through conservation.

With the NES, the DENR co-shares the vision of positioning the Philippines as a globally competitive ecotourism destination as it endeavors to develop and protect the country's environment and preserve our cultural heritage for the benefit of the present and future generations.

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Executive Summary

The Philippines is regarded as one of the top 25 biodiversity hotspots in the world in view of high percentage of endemic plants and animals which are threatened by extinction.

Recognizing the diverse natural and cultural resources of the country, Executive Order (EO) No. 111 was issued on 17 June 1999 to establish the guidelines for ecotourism development in the Philippines. The EO likewise created the National Ecotourism Development Council as policy making body, and the National Ecotourism Steering Committee (NESC) and Regional Ecotourism Committees (RECs) as operating arms. In addition, the EO called for the formulation of National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) to provide an integrated management plan for the development of ecotourism.

Pursuant to EO 111, the NESC through the assistance of New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) spearheaded the preparation of the NES. Regional stakeholders consultation and national planning workshops were conducted by NESC, RECs and NZAID to provide venue for key stakeholders to contribute in the planning process as well as elicit issues, concerns and recommendations. The planning process was capped by the launching of NES during the Second National Ecotourism Congress in Tacloban City.

The NES viewed ecotourism not as an imported concept but a direct response to real needs and circumstances in the country. Ecotourism rests on the following pillars:

- sustainable management of natural and cultural resources;
- environmental education and conservation awareness;
- empowerment of local communities; and
- development of products that will satisfy visitor needs and position the Philippines as a globally competitive ecotourism destination.

The NES is founded on the vision to advocate, foster, coordinate, monitor and mobilize support for ecotourism. It specifically aims to:

- promote and mobilize support for ecotourism from all sectors-government, businesses and general populace;
- develop a culture of tourism among the local people;
- institutionalize community participation in planning, development, implementation and monitoring of ecotourism projects;
- promote environmental education and ethics;
- develop capability of LGUs and local entrepreneurs; facilitate domestic and foreign investments to fill in facilities requirements; and
- develop globally competitive ecotourism products for quality visitor experience; ensure benefits redound to the local community.

The general approach to achieve NES goals involve the establishment of network of sites and products through a “top-down and bottom-up” approach. The Top-down seeks to define flows from the national government by developing and marketing key ecotourism sites as well as setting the standards to regulate and monitor ecotourism projects. The bottom-up is envisioned to provide opportunity for host communities, local government units, local entrepreneurs, non-government organizations and other stakeholders to actively participate in the protection and management of their resources and other viable ecotourism projects.

An important approach in the NES is the establishment of communication network via the website, newsletter and other media to facilitate sharing of information and experiences among stakeholders. It also provide for linking key sites and products to facilitate the development of new packages and programs that will ensure a longer visitor stay and a quality experience.

A set of National Ecotourism Program has been identified in the NES in support of its implementation. The program includes selection of key ecotourism sites, product development, marketing and promotions, education and advocacy, establishment of ecotourism fund, support programs and monitoring.

Action plan for each national ecotourism program was also identified in the short term (2002 – 2004), medium term (2002 – 2007) and long term (2002 – 2012).

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The DOT and DENR jointly extend their sincere thanks and gratitude to all of those who cooperated and participated in the formulation of the National Ecotourism Strategy.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIT	Asian Institute of Tourism
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASA	Air Services Agreement
ASSET	Accessing Support Services and Entrepreneurial Technology
BCOD	Bureau of Cooperatives Development
BIMP - EAGA	Brunei Indonesia Malaysia Philippines - East Asian Growth Area
CBCRM	Community-Based Coastal Resource Management
CBBE	Community and Barangay Business Enterprise
CBST	Community-Based Sustainable Tourism
CD	Community Development
CDA	Cooperatives Development Authority
CI	Conservation International
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CITIES	Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna
CO	Community Organization
CPPAP	Conservation of Priority Protected Areas Project
CRMP	Coastal Resource Management Plan / Project
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
DOT	Department of Tourism
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ECC	Environmental Compliance Certificate
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EO	Executive Order
ETWG	Ecotourism Technical Working Group
FASPO	Foreign-Assisted Projects Office
FIT	Free and Independent Traveler
GAST	Green Alliance for Sustainable Tourism
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNP	Gross National Product
GOP	Government of the Philippines
GPS	Global Positioning System
ha	hectare
HRAP	Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines
HTIP	Hotel Tourism Institute of the Philippines
IPAF	Integrated Protected Area Fund
KKP	Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas
LGSP	Local Government Support Program
LGU	Local Government Unit
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MR	Marine Reserve

MTPDP	Medium Term Philippine Development Plan
NAIA	Ninoy Aquino International Airport
NCCA	National Commission for Culture and the Arts
NEAP	Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NEDC	National Ecotourism Development Council
NEPO	National Ecotourism Program Office
NES	National Ecotourism Strategy
NESC	National Ecotourism Steering Committee
NGA	National Government Agency
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NIPA	NGOs for Integrated Protected Areas
NIPAS	National Integrated Protected Area System
NPPF	National Physical Framework Plan
NSO	National Statistics Office
NTO	National Tourism Organization
OBST	Olango Birds and Seascape Tour
P	Philippine Peso
PA	Protected Area
PALF	Philippine Airlines Foundation
PAMB	Protected Area Management Board
PAWB	Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau
PCVC	Philippine Convention and Visitor Center
PD	Presidential Decree
PHILTOA	Philippine Tour Operators Association
PRRM	Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
PSWO	Provincial Social Welfare Officer
PTA	Philippine Tourism Authority
PTO	Provincial Tourism Officer
RA	Republic Act
REC	Regional Ecotourism Committee
RETWG	Regional Ecotourism Working Group
SNS	Save Nature Society
TA	Technical Assistance
TESDA	Technical Education Skills and Development Authority
TIBFI	Tourism Industry Board Foundation Inc.
TMP	Tourism Master Plan
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UN/FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
UP	University of the Philippines
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature (World Wildlife Fund)

1

Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

In 1991, the Department of Tourism in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO), prepared the Philippine Tourism Master Plan (TMP). Among the objectives established by the TMP is the positioning of the Philippines as a world-class tourism destination under the guiding principle of sustainable tourism development. In 1992, a National Tourism Congress took up this theme and the concept of “ecotourism” was introduced in the Philippines. Between 1994 and 1998, a series of regional seminars discussed the sustainable tourism and ecotourism concepts. This work culminated in a 1998 technical workshop during which the elements of a sustainable tourism development framework were identified and key issues defined.

On 17 June 1999, Executive Order (EO) 111 was issued. This established a formal organizational structure for the development of ecotourism in the Philippines. EO 111 created a National Ecotourism Development Council (NEDC), composed of the Secretaries of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, Interior and Local Government, Trade and Industry, Finance, Education, the Secretary-General of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and representatives from the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Under the NEDC, a National Ecotourism Steering Committee (NESC) and Regional Ecotourism Committees (RECs) were established to implement programs and activities approved by NEDC. EO 111 also called for an Ecotourism Technical Working Group (ETWG) to provide technical and administrative support to the NEDC and the NESC. All of these bodies are referred to collectively in this report as the “EO 111 Bodies.”

As articulated in EO 111, the following policies served as bases for proposing a system to promote and develop ecotourism in the Philippines:

- The State shall develop and promote sustainable tourism while enjoining the participation of the Filipino people in enhancing the growth and competitiveness of the Philippine economy; and
- The State shall ensure the sustainable use, development, management, protection and conservation of the country’s environment and natural resources and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of the present and future generations.

The EO 111, therefore, provides for the formulation of a national ecotourism strategy and program for the promotion and development of ecotourism in the Philippines.

The National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) shall be prepared to provide an integrated management plan, which shall warrant a comprehensive direction for the future of

ecotourism in the country by recognizing issues and problems for its sustainable development and recommend feasible approaches in addressing these issues. The Strategy shall be formulated in consultation with concerned stakeholders in the environment and tourism sectors including indigenous peoples and local communities to be affected by ecotourism development. Other specific and urgent national imperatives to be addressed by the NES are:

- Diversification of the Philippine tourism product mix in the light of current downturn in visitor arrivals;
- Spreading tourism benefits to rural areas not only for employment generation and poverty alleviation but also for the sustainability of the tourism industry;
- Provision of an economic rationale for conservation of natural and cultural sites to ensure the long-term sustainability of conservation management systems;
- Promotion of wholesome styles of recreation in outdoor environments and provision of conservation awareness and education programs outside the classrooms;
- Creation of models that will demonstrate ways for local communities to engage in non-exploitative and sustainable utilization of natural resources.

To complement and support the NES, a National Ecotourism Program (NEP) shall be developed. The NEP shall encompass the major aspects of ecotourism, which are 1) development, management and protection of identified ecotourism sites; 2) product enhancement and development; 3) environmental education and information campaign; 4) support programs for community stewardship and livelihood development.

The First National Ecotourism Congress held in Bohol on 27-29 October 1999 defined ecotourism and its role in the promotion of sustainable development, management, protection and conservation of the country’s environment, natural resources and cultural heritage.

1.2 THE PLANNING PROCESS

A proposal was submitted by the Philippine Government to the New Zealand Government for technical assistance in the formulation of the NES. The New Zealand Official Development Assistance (NZODA) approved the Philippine proposal and consultants were contracted to work alongside the NESC and ETWG in the planning process.

A National Ecotourism Program Office (NEPO) was established at the DOT to serve as homebase of the ETWG. Extensive regional ecotourism stakeholders’ consultation workshops were conducted by the ETWG as shown in Table 1-1 for the NES. These regional workshops were designed to allow key stakeholders the opportunity to contribute to the NES planning process from the outset.

The workshops also provided the venue to elicit information and familiarize the ETWG with ecotourism in the regions. Based on the workshops and site visits, members of the ETWG prepared the situation analysis section of the NES (Section 3).

Table1-1: Regional Ecotourism Stakeholder Consultation Workshops in 2001

CAR	- 2 August, Baguio City	Region VII	- 20 June, Tabilaran City
Region I	- 18 August, San Fernando City	Region VIII	- 29 June, Tacloban City
Region II	- 20 June, Tuguegarao City	Region IX	- 5 September, Zamboanga City
Region III	- 23 August, Angeles City	Region X	- 26 April, Cagayan de Oro
Region IV A	- 19 September, Tagaytay City	Region XI	- 2 May, Davao City
Region IV B	- 23 August, Puerto Princesa	Region XII	- 13 September, Cotabato City
Region V	- 20 June, Legaspi City	CARAGA	- 26 April, Cagayan de Oro
Region VI	- 21 June, Iloilo City		

The Bohol Congress definition of ecotourism was used as the starting point in building a shared vision on how to develop styles of tourism that conform to the ideals implied by that definition. Among the outputs of the regional workshops was an inventory of ecotourism products, packages and markets.

- A National Ecotourism Planning Workshop was held at Clark Airbase in Pampanga on 27 – 28 November 2001 and attended by 85 members of EO 111 Bodies to:
- discuss the elements of the proposed NES based on the issues and concerns identified by the stakeholders during the regional ecotourism stakeholder consultation workshops;
 - select key ecotourism sites based on the identified list of areas in the regional workshops; and
 - develop an action plan for the proposed NES.

The key results of the National Ecotourism Planning Workshop were contained in the Preliminary Draft NES, which was circulated and used by the RECs to generate stakeholder feedback.

2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1.1 TOURISM AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Tourism in the Philippines accounts for 8.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and generates approximately five million jobs. Recently, tourism has achieved a higher level of priority within GOP economic policy. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has elevated tourism to a senior cabinet post. The Medium Term Philippines Development Plan (MTPDP) 2001-2004 now features a separate chapter on tourism and its contribution to the economy. Tourism is seen as a means to achieve national objectives centered on poverty alleviation, employment generation and infrastructure strengthening.

The chapter on tourism in the MTPDP is based on information in the Philippine Tourism Master Plan (TMP) for the period 1991-2010, and the President's pronouncement identifying tourism as one of the pillars of the country's economic recovery program. The main goals of the TMP are to:

- Optimize the contribution of tourism to economic growth at the national and regional levels.
- Enhance and contribute to social cohesion and cultural preservation at the local level.
- Develop tourism on an environmentally sustainable basis.
- Develop a diversity of destinations, attractions and markets to minimize exposure to external threats to the tourism industry.

A 1999 assessment of the TMP's implementation revealed that major policy shifts were evident in the areas of transportation and infrastructure, while those of human resources, marketing and other areas had yet to be fully achieved.

In the transportation sector, EO 219 liberalized international and domestic aviation policy. This policy opened market access to new players on domestic routes, thus, improving the accessibility of major tourism destinations at competitive prices with better quality service. Airports were upgraded and new gateways were opened in Luzon (Laoag, Subic and Clark), Visayas (Mactan-Cebu) and Mindanao (Davao, Zamboanga and General Santos). Water transport was expanded with the issuance of EO 185, which opened the domestic water transport industry to new operators and investors.

Recognizing the importance of the environment to the tourism industry, the TMP also espoused a set of principles to aid tourism planning and development at the national, regional and local levels. These principles include:

- Environmental sustainability which ensures that the present use of the environment and its resources are maintained at a level that does not prejudice the ability of future generations to similarly use these resources and meet their own needs.

- Ecosystem linkages that serve as a basis for the establishment by legislation or a joint management procedure for both terrestrial and adjacent coastal tourism areas.
- Ecological interactions or the recognition of the intrinsic connection between sustainable use of living resources and protecting ecological processes.
- Multiple use zones that allow the maximum variety of uses consistent with conservation and acknowledging nature-based limitations in the pursuit of development.
- Effective integration of environmental and socio-economic consideration into the decision-making process ("sound ecology is good economics").

The TMP advocates the concept of sustainable development through the implementation of appropriate policies and strategies to protect areas with high environmental and cultural sensitivity while at the same time providing livelihood to local community and enhancing the quality of visitor experience.

2.1.2 ECOTOURISM POLICY

Anchored on the TMP and Philippine Agenda (PA) 21, a sustainable tourism development framework was prepared by DOT in 1998, providing for ecotourism as a form of tourism that can sustainably use natural and cultural resources while providing employment opportunities for local communities. At that time, collaborations between DOT and other agencies such as the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) of DENR, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the National Museum were to be instigated with the aim of fostering ecotourism.

Building on these initiatives, EO 111 issued in 1998 provided the basis for a formal partnership between DOT and DENR, and other agencies, to develop and promote ecotourism. EO 111 also established an institutional framework and mechanism for the integrated development of ecotourism. The objectives of EO 111 were furthered by the National Ecotourism Congress in Bohol in 1999 that adopted a national policy and definition of ecotourism.

2.1.3 PROTECTED AREAS POLICY

In 1992, RA 7586 was passed providing for the establishment and management of a National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS). The NIPAS law also provides for the establishment of buffer zones and other multiple use zones including ecotourism. Zoning recognizes the role of tourism in protection, development and management of protected areas. Tourism activities, particularly ecotourism, are permitted in "recreational zones" to provide benefits to local residents as well as enable visitors to appreciate the beauty of nature. Along these lines, DOT and PAWB have teamed up to develop a meaningful policy.

The NIPAS law mandates the establishment of a Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) to plan and administer the protected area, approve implementation proposals and work plans, delineate boundaries, and promulgate rules and regulations for their conservation, protection and management. Relevant policies on cave management are governed by RA 9072, the National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act. RA 9147, the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, is also a policy consideration for ecotourism activities.

2.2 AGENTS OF DEVELOPMENT

2.2.1 MOTIVATIONS FOR INVOLVEMENT

There are a wide range of individuals and organizations involved in activities associated with planning, developing and marketing ecotourism. Their involvement in ecotourism is motivated by a variety different interests, ranging from the need to conserve natural resources, develop local communities and alleviate poverty, to providing an economic rationale for utilizing protected areas.

2.2.2 ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN ECOTOURISM

National Government

DOT is mandated by EO 120 to ensure that tourism's economic benefits are dispersed to a wider segment of the population.

The DENR is mandated by EO 192 to conserve, manage and develop the Philippines' environment and natural resources including its territorial waters and lands of public domain. The DENR oversees bureaus that ensure the sustainable management of natural areas. The PAWB is the bureau under the DENR concerned with the establishment and effective management of the Integrated Protected Areas System. The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) is concerned with matters relating to environmental management and pollution control.

There are additional national government agencies whose support is essential to ecotourism, namely:

- Department of Education – to raise awareness of the need for environmental protection and cultural heritage protection, and to foster social cohesion and national unity among Filipinos.
- Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) – to ensure that LGUs play a key role in developing ecotourism programs.
- Department of Finance – to develop an incentive program for ecotourism to stimulate local communities and the private sector.
- Department of Trade and Industry – to foster the development of indigenous products that can be promoted and marketed internationally.
- National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) – to help ensure the needs of local people are incorporated in ecotourism planning.
- National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) – to support conservation of the cultural heritage resource base of ecotourism.
- National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)– to provide the policy and enabling climate for ecotourism to develop in consonance with PA 21.

Non-Governmental Organizations

While government provides the policy framework, there are many non-government agents that have contributed to the actual groundwork of ecotourism. Often working largely independent of government, these organizations collaborate with each other and have secured support from international sources to implement various ecotourism programs.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of the Philippines started developing ecotourism projects in the 1980s when “ecotourism” first became a buzzword among conservation groups throughout the world. Key NGOs involved in the development of ecotourism include:

- Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM). Under its “EcoDev Tour” program, PRRM has developed nature tours in Ifugao, Marinduque Island and Camiguin.
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Philippines (Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas - KKP) is an environmental organization committed to reverse the accelerating degradation of the environment. The KKP is involved with ecotourism programs in Tubbataha, Donsol, Pamilacan Is. and Turtle Islands.
- Conservation International (CI) helps in the protection of ecosystems and improving the quality of life of local communities. CI has recently been involved with ecotourism in the Northern Sierra Madre and Palawan.
- Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) Philippines provides long-term practical assistance to both government and NGOs working on issues that face the urban and rural people throughout the country. The key areas that VSO are working include community-based resource management, enterprise development as well as education and communication.
- Accessing Support Services and Entrepreneurial Technology (ASSET) provides assistance to various organizations to build their capacity as agents of social change and managers of people-driven development. ASSET is a founding member of the Philippine Community-based Sustainable Tourism (CBST) Association It is implementing projects in Bohol, Palawan, Cebu, Davao, Camiguin, Ifugao, El Nido, Marinduque and Bataan.
- Haribon Foundation works for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management. Its mission includes the promotion of community-based management strategies and Haribon has undertaken programs in Mt. Isarog, Masinloc (Zambales), Bolinao (Pangasinan) and Getafe (Bohol).
- El Nido Foundation is a social development organization that seeks to improve the quality of life in El Nido while at the same time preserving the area's natural integrity through community-based efforts and partnerships in conservation and sustainable utilization of resources.

Government Corporations

- The Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) is attached to DOT as its implementing arm for physical development. The PTA has set aside a special fund for environmental projects related to ecotourism. Examples include the conservation of Chocolate Hills Natural Monument and endangered tarsiers in Bohol, and the propagation of giant clams and rehabilitation of coral reefs in the Hundred Island National Park.
- The Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation (PCVC) is attached to DOT and is responsible for international tourism marketing and promotion.

Private Sector

Compared with other ASEAN countries, the Philippines is lagging behind its neighbors in private sector ecotourism development and promotion. There are relatively few specialized ecotourism operators in the Philippines such as the Ten Knots Corporation's El Nido Resorts (owned by the Asian Conservation Corporation), some dive operators and a handful of adventure operators.

Local Government Units (LGUs)

In accordance with the Local Government Code of 1991 (RA 7160) a number of LGUs have already linked up with DOT, DENR, NGOs and the private sector to undertake community-based sustainable tourism projects. LGUs are universally recognized as potential key players in the successful development of ecotourism in the Philippines. Some LGUs have collaborated with media and outdoors clubs to promote greater consciousness to protect the environment and cultural heritage.

Several LGUs have won awards from national and international bodies for their efforts to promote environmental protection, conservation and management. For example, Baguio City's Eco-Walk was undertaken by the LGU in close cooperation with the media, DENR, NGO and local organizations. Palawan has been cited as an ideal ecotourism site, partly due to the LGUs active role in protecting the environment through advocacy and dialogues with communities and stakeholders. LGU initiatives in Bohol have helped make it an ideal site for ecotourism. The successful dolphin and whale-watching tour in Bais, was spearheaded by the LGU in tandem with NGOs.

International Organizations and Bilateral Arrangements.

International agencies have launched various programs to promote ecotourism as a means to save degrading natural resources. Examples include Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary where USAID has extended financial and technical support to DENR's Coastal Resources Management Program (CRMP). The World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF) has allocated US\$8 million to fund alternative livelihood in ten priority protected areas under the Conservation of Priority Protected Area Project (CPPAP) of DENR. The NGOs for Integrated Protected Areas (NIPA) which is managing CPPAP has signed a memorandum of agreement with DOT. Other organizations with programs that involve aspects of ecotourism include UNDP, European Union (EU) and World Tourism Organization (WTO).

Spain has provided bilateral assistance to PRRM to implement their ecotourism program in Camiguin Island. NZODA is providing technical assistance for the formulation and implementation of the National Ecotourism Strategy.

Outdoor Associations

Educational and outdoor recreational groups have actively supported ecotourism with a view to building greater awareness and commitment to environmental protection. Special interest activities such as bird, dolphin and whale watching have developed a niche market for local travelers.

Outdoors recreational programs such as whitewater rafting, kayaking, mountain climbing, mountain biking, canopy walk and cave exploration have gained popularity among domestic travelers, especially students and young professionals. These programs are supported by outdoor recreational organizations such as clubs and associations. Popular ecotourism programs include caving, river running and trekking in Callao Caves (Tuguegarao), Alayan Caves (Nueva Vizcaya) and on Mt. Pinatubo.

2.2.3 ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Despite some success, there are still a number of constraints that inhibit the organizations involved to further develop and promote ecotourism. These constraints, arrived at during the Regional Ecotourism Stakeholders Consultation Workshops, include:

Planning

- Little effort is given to encourage greater private sector participation in the management of protected areas in partnership with local communities.
- The abilities of local communities are over-estimated. Local ownership and participation are desirable and necessary, but they often exhibit a limited degree of the necessary skills and business acumen.
- Conflicting and divergent roles of government, private sector and NGOs sometimes cause confusion among local communities.

Implementation and Operation

- Entry fees to conservation areas are not enough to support operational expenses and expansion programs that could enhance the quality of experience and attract more visitors.
- Earnings from licenses and gate receipts are sometimes deposited with central authorities and thus are no longer available to finance local nature conservation or facilities' improvement.
- Local populations often lack the necessary know-how, experience and financial resources.
- Local labor forces cannot take on qualified jobs because of the low level of training, education and skills.
- Tourism potential is sometimes over-estimated because of lack of realistic feasibility or market studies.

Marketing

- Private sector and other relevant organizations are ignored instead of being included for their professionalism and understanding of markets.
- Linkage with the tourism industry, particularly tour operators, wholesalers and marketing agents needs significant strengthening.

2.2.4 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

To address these concerns, DOT and DENR have worked together to evolve the partnership needed to jump-start ecotourism awareness and cooperation. EO 111 laid down an institutional mechanism for ecotourism and institutionalizes partnerships among the three important stakeholders - namely, government, business and civil society – in the EO 111 Bodies.

The selection of representatives from the private sector and NGOs to the EO 111 Bodies was undertaken based on a set of criteria that emphasize commitment to sustainable tourism development. The vital roles of indigenous peoples and the academic community in planning, managing, monitoring and advocating for ecotourism were also recognized by representation on the NEDC and NESC.

The policy and institutional environment has thus been largely established and a wide range of individuals and organizations are now formally associated with ecotourism at the national and local level. It is intended that the EO 111 Bodies also serve as a catalyst to bring together other agents of development to collaborate and cooperate towards developing and managing ecotourism.

The Regional Ecotourism Stakeholders Consultation Workshops suggested a few final steps that could further enhance the policy and institutional framework. These included:

- Harmonize existing programs and projects at the local level building on the Bohol Congress definition of ecotourism.
- Institutionalize EO 111 through national legislation.
- Provide financing and technical assistance to small ecotourism enterprises.
- Develop standards and accreditation programs for a variety of ecotourism products to ensure the consistent quality of visitor experience.
- Establish a network of ecotourism practitioners through the formation of a Philippine Ecotourism Communications Network.
- Provide technical and financial assistance to small-scale ecotourism enterprises by linking them with a network of practitioners and financing institutions.
- Create a permanent unit within DOT and DENR to handle the coordination of ecotourism activities, dissemination of information, and sharing of experiences among individuals and organizations involved in ecotourism.
- Establish Regional Ecotourism Technical Working Groups (RETWG) to assist the RECs carry out their mandate in EO 111.
- Provide policy support through national and local incentives, as well as financing and matching grants for ecotourism projects.
- Integrate ecotourism in overall policies and programs at the local level, particularly in disseminating information, enhancing awareness and education.

2.3 NATURAL RESOURCE BASE

2.3.1 NATURAL RESOURCES FOR ECOTOURISM

Throughout the process of preparing the NES, the natural resource base has been analyzed in terms of its potential and significance for ecotourism. The culmination of the assessment takes the form of Banner Sites, Key Ecotourism Sites and Emerging and Potential Ecotourism Sites, all of which are presented in Section 4 below.

With just over 7,000 islands, the Philippines or “Pearl of the Orient Seas” is the world’s second largest archipelago after Indonesia’s 17,000 islands. Along with Malaysia, Indonesia, Borneo and Papua New Guinea, the Philippines forms the Coral Triangle, the most diverse marine habitat of the tropics. The reefs of the Sulu and Sulawesi seas are home to about 580 of the world’s 793 species of reef-building corals, compared to just 50 in the Caribbean and 300 in the Great Barrier Reef. There are over 19 identified species of marine mammals and 1,200 varieties of reef fish, including the plankton-feeding whale shark, the world’s largest fish.

The natural resource base for ecotourism also encompasses wetlands, volcanoes, rugged cliffs, craggy seascapes, and serene lakes harboring a rich variety of plants and

animals. In the forest, fields and mountains about 500 species of birds have been recorded, of which 172 species are found only in these islands. The Philippines ranks fifth in the world and second in Asia, next to Indonesia, in terms of its number of endemic animals. Among plant rich countries, the Philippines ranks 25th in the world and eighth in Asia.

The Philippines is considered both a mega-diversity country and one of the world’s highest priority hotspots for the conservation of nature. Despite current high levels of biodiversity, the country’s natural resources are a legacy of rapid rates of depletion. Forest cover has been reduced from more than 50 percent to less than 24 percent over a 40-year period (1948 to 1987). Less than five percent of the country’s coral reefs remain in excellent condition, and an estimated 50 percent of national parks are estimated to be no longer biologically important (Philippines Biodiversity Action Plan 1997). Over the last decade, both coastal and terrestrial conservation programs have helped slow the rate of species decline and habitat destruction in some areas. There are now encouraging signs that coral reefs are starting to recover in selected locations (such as Negros Oriental, Bohol and Batangas).

2.3.2 SUMMARY OF VOLCANO, FOREST AND MOUNTAIN ATTRACTIONS

Along with Japan, Hawaii, New Zealand and Vanuatu, the Philippines is the only other country on the Pacific “Rim of Fire” that provides the chance of seeing active volcanoes. During the last decade, the eruptions of Pinatubo and Mayon, Kanlaon and other volcanoes have turned them into increasingly popular natural attractions for domestic and overseas visitors. A commercial trekking operation has been established on Mt. Pinatubo and local amateur guides are available for hire at Mts. Mayon, Kanlaon and Taal. Mt. Taal is the most visited volcano, being located only two hours drive from Manila.

Volcano, forest and mountain attractions range from accessible forested areas such as Bataan National Park near Subic to that of the 400,000 hectare expanse of Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park in north east Philippines. The volcanoes, forests and mountains which to date have had a focus on resource protection and ecotourism include:

- Camiguin Island
- Kanlaon Natural Park
- Mayon Volcano Natural Park
- Mt. Apo Natural Park
- Mt. Guiting-Guiting Natural Park
- Mt. Isarog National Park
- Mt. Kitanglad Range Natural Park
- Mt. Makiling National Park
- Mt. Pinatubo
- Mt. Pulag National Park
- Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park
- Taal Volcano / Tagaytay

Currently, the mountains and volcanoes of the Philippines have limited appeal to overseas visitors when compared with those found in other ASEAN destinations such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. This can be explained by a number of factors including a lack of marketing, products and services, proximity to major gateways and security concerns.

The volcanoes, forests and mountains of the Philippines are characterized by a number of other relevant issues:

- Trekking and climbing products and services are limited, and generally run by enthusiastic amateur groups of local climbers rather than full-time professional mountain guides. There is an opportunity to develop a small, professional outdoor industry based on volcano and mountain trekking.
- Arbitrary restrictions on the number of visitors allowed to some volcanoes, forests and mountains discourages visitation and reduces potential local benefits (e.g. closure of the main access to Mt. Apo due to track erosion, limits on the number of climbers to Mt. Kanlaon and Mt. Isarog etc.).
- Emergency response services are limited.
- Illegal logging, shifting cultivation, land tenure and access disputes among local communities continue to place pressure on native forest areas.

For the domestic market, the volcanoes, mountains and forests of the Philippines have increasing significance as places to escape crowded cities and experience natural scenery. Outdoor endurance events (such as the Mt. Pinatubo Adventure Race) and non-competitive group climbs are helping to raise the profile of the country's mountains and volcanoes. Future demand is likely to be dominated by the domestic market.

2.3.3 SUMMARY OF COASTAL AND MARINE ATTRACTIONS

The coastal and marine attractions of the Philippines are well known internationally and have the potential to become world class ecotourism products. In terms of market profile, they are already the furthest ahead, except perhaps the Cordillera Rice Terraces, which has high recognition overseas. Coastal-based ecotourism includes activities such as scuba diving, snorkeling, sea kayaking, marine mammal viewing, etc.

The conventional beach resort image of the Philippines is still strong in ASEAN, Australia, Europe and US markets. Destinations such as Boracay and Cebu remain the core of beach-based tourism in the Philippines. There are, however, a number of other destinations that are emerging with important ecotourism potential. Key examples include:

- Apo Island Protected Landscape and Seascape
- Apo Reef Natural Park
- Bohol, Visayas
- Coron Island, Palawan
- Donsol, Sorsogon (whale shark encounters)
- El Nido Managed Resource Protected Area
- Hundred Islands National Park
- Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary - Birds and Seascape Tour
- Siargao Protected Landscape and Seascape
- Tañon Strait Protected Seascape
- Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park
- Turtles Island Wildlife Sanctuary

The most successful ecotourism products in the Philippines are currently based on coastal or marine resources. Whale shark encounters have recently been established at Donsol; whale and dolphin watching is operating successfully in the Tañon Strait from Bais;

diving in Tubbataha helps to generate funds for the management of Tubbataha World Heritage Site; the Olango Island Birds and Seascape Tour is helping to protect an internationally important wetland and bird sanctuary; and El Nido Resorts in Palawan are actively involved with community development and conservation of the El Nido Managed Resource Protected Area. There are opportunities to enhance existing products, and to ensure new attractions involve local people in tourism benefits and ensure there is a conservation element.

Although some of these examples are relatively small-scale, they illustrate the potential for the Philippines to build on a reputation for diversifying traditional styles of coastal tourism into styles that actively support the conservation of coastal and marine resources.

The main issues related to ecotourism in coastal and marine areas that emerged during the Regional Ecotourism Stakeholders Consultation Workshops include:

- Illegal fishing, damage to coral reefs, and pressure on icon species such as whale sharks and manta rays.
- Quality and safety are important in skilled operations such as scuba diving.
- Involving local people both directly and indirectly in tourism benefits.
- Fishermen and other locals who have become tour guides require intensive and on-going training in English language, ecotourism principles and practices, tour guiding and safety.
- Strong links are required between coastal marine ecotourism ventures and mainstream beach tourism in the Philippines.

2.3.4 SUMMARY OF LAKE, RIVER AND WETLAND ATTRACTIONS

Lakes and wetlands in the Philippines are important feeding and wintering grounds for migratory birds from Siberia, Japan, Australia and Southeast Asia. Wetlands provide bird watching, scientific study and culture-orientated opportunities. As such, they are well suited for niche markets. Some of the major rivers in the Philippines are receiving increasing use for commercial and non-commercial rafting, tubing and kayaking. None of these can be considered icon products as yet, but it is noted that rafting on the Cagayan and Chico Rivers in northern Luzon, has achieved a good level of market awareness in middle to upper Filipino income earners and the expatriate community in Manila. Lakes, rivers and wetlands with existing or emerging ecotourism potential include:

- Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, North East Mindanao
- Bulusan Lake, Bicol Region
- Cagayan de Oro River, Mindanao
- Cagayan River, North East Luzon
- Chico River, North East Luzon
- Lake Danao Natural Park, Leyte
- Sibulan River, Davao, Mindanao

River running in the Philippines is being seen as an increasingly important opportunity for the development of a professional outdoor industry. It has the potential to sit alongside other professional outdoor industries such as diving. Currently, almost all river running equipment such as rafts and kayaks has to be imported. A Handbook for Whitewater Rafting and regulations for accreditation are currently proposed by DOT.

Relevant issues for river and lake based ecotourism in the Philippines that arose during the Regional Ecotourism Stakeholders Consultation Workshops include:

- Establishment of standards, accreditation and an industry association for river running activities.
- Monitoring and management of tourism ventures in sensitive sites such as Agusan Marsh.
- Development of a retail industry (Outfitter Association) to support the growing demand for river running.

2.3.5 SUMMARY OF CAVE ATTRACTIONS

Caves are found throughout the Philippines in relatively young karst landscapes. They are popular with domestic visitors but currently hold limited appeal for international markets. Caves in competing ASEAN destinations such as the Mulu Caves in Sarawak Malaysia are more spectacular, and have well established facilities and flows of international visitors. In the Philippines, the Puerto Princesa Underground River is the only cave system that has the features, services and facilities that cater for both domestic and international visitors. Other important examples of caves in the Philippines include:

- Alayan Caves System at Malabing Valley
- Callao Caves and Peñablanca Protected Landscape, Cagayan
- Sagada Caves, Luzon
- Sohoton Natural Bridge National Park, Samar

Relevant issues for cave tourism in the Philippines arising from the Regional Ecotourism Stakeholders Consultation Workshops were:

- On-site information on the natural and cultural history of the caves would enhance the visitor experience and understanding of the cave systems.
- Information via local guides, signs and brochures may also help to manage the current levels of damage to cave formations.
- The Philippine Cave Guides Association is an amateur organization that needs support in order to establish a professional cave guiding industry. The Association, in cooperation with DOT, has been instrumental in establishing cave guiding standards in the Philippines.

2.3.6 SUMMARY OF NATURE-BASED CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

Three outstanding examples of cultural landscapes have been identified during the NES study:

- Batanes Protected Landscape and Seascape
- Cordillera Rice Terraces
- Lake Sebu Protected Landscape

Of the three, only the Cordillera Rice Terraces in Ifugao have well-established tourist flows. The scenic beauty and cultural attractions of Lake Sebu in South Cotabato was becoming established as a tourism product before the security situation deteriorated in Southern Mindanao. Batanes is well suited for high yield but small niche markets. Trekking in the rice terraces could also become a high yield, low volume icon product.

2.3.7 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF NATURAL RESOURCE BASE FOR ECOTOURISM

Almost all the natural attractions for ecotourism in the Philippines are managed under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act. The Act is administered through DENR and its Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB). Although over 200 units of land or water have some form of protected area status, the NIPAS legislation provides the main institutional framework by which many stakeholder groups play a role in nature conservation and ecotourism.

A Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) system has endeavored to realize two important objectives for the government: strengthening local governance and fostering effective partnerships between the government and civil society in resource and protected area management. The PAMB, which is the policy-making body at the site level, exercises management supervision over each protected area in association with DENR's protected area superintendents and staff. Issues associated with ancestral domains, many of which occur within and around protected areas, are addressed by the indigenous peoples' representatives on each PAMB.

Protected areas in the Philippines are in general poorly funded. An Integrated Protected Area Fund (IPAF) enables PAMBs to build up funds through entry fees and commercial licenses that in turn goes towards management of the protected areas. However, only a portion of PAMB revenues is retained at PAMB level, thus reducing the incentive for revenue generation. The rest is returned to the national government. Most commercial concessions or license fees are set at low levels. There appears ample opportunity for ecotourism to make a more substantial financial contribution towards the cost of managing protected areas. Apart from the EU and GEF programs, very few funds are allocated to managing visitors in protected areas. Facilities such as walking tracks, picnic areas, comfort rooms and signs have been provided by DENR but considerable support for additional facilities and services such as information and accommodation has come from LGUs and the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA).

Out of the 200 or so protected areas, 18 have been given the highest priority through two externally funded programs. These sites also offer some of the best potential for ecotourism within the protected area system. Eight sites are supported by the National Integrated Protected Area Program (NIPAP), a special project of DENR assisted by a grant from the European Union (EU). These include:

- Coron Island, Palawan
- El Nido Managed Resource Protected Area, Palawan
- Malampaya Sound Protected Landscape and Seascape, Palawan
- Mt. Guiting-Guiting Natural Park, Sibuyan Island, Romblon
- Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park, Mindoro
- Mt. Isarog National Park, Camines Sur
- Mt. Malindang National Park, Misamis Occidental
- Mt. Pulag National Park, Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya

Ten other sites are assisted by the Conservation of Priority Protected Areas and Conservation Project (CPPAP), a joint project of DENR and NGOs for Integrated Protected

Areas (NIPA), with funding assistance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) World Bank. These include:

- Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary
- Apo Reef Natural Park
- Batanes Protected Landscape and Seascape
- Bataan National Park
- Kanlaon Natural Park
- Mt. Kitanglad Natural Park
- Mt. Apo Natural Park
- Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park
- Siargao Protected Landscape and Seascape
- Turtle Island Wildlife Sanctuary

All 18 sites have rudimentary management plans that have been prepared by the PAMBs with support from DENR / PAWB and some Local Government Units (LGUs). The LGUs usually provide administrative and logistical support in project implementation as well as law enforcement. Other national government agencies provide technical support to the LGUs and PAMBs in biodiversity conservation and assistance in law enforcement within their jurisdictions. For instance in Mt. Guiting-Guiting Natural Park, the Philippine National Police, Philippine Maritime Police and Coast Guard and the Philippine Air Force are involved in law enforcement.

Although the main focus for the 18 sites to date has been on the conservation of nature, this has recently begun to be broadened to include livelihood projects, some involving ecotourism. The preparation of the NES is thus timely for protected area management in the Philippines.

The most important issues at the interface of ecotourism and protected area management that arose during the Regional Ecotourism Stakeholders Consultation Workshops are:

- Slowing the rate and extent of habitat destruction through the development of ecotourism livelihood projects.
- Adequately strengthening the PAMBs, DENR / PAWB and LGUs so they can provide suitable visitor facilities and services.
- Using pragmatic approaches for managing concerns over the carrying capacities for many protected areas.
- Building partnerships between central and local government, communities and the private sector so that ecotourism livelihood projects are commercially viable. The economic alternatives of illegal logging and other extractive uses are far too attractive unless ecotourism can be proven as a realistic alternative.
- Law enforcement issues need to be resolved between the national government, PAMBs and LGUs, and PAMB and LGU capacity increased so that ecotourism areas can be more effectively managed.
- Ecotourism planning should involve indigenous peoples, consider existing guidelines set by indigenous peoples for visitors entering their domain areas, and respect for their indigenous management plans.

2.3.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM

Table 2-3 is presented as a summary of Section 2.3.

Table 2-3: Summary Table of the Natural Resource Base for Ecotourism Development in the Philippines

Category	Opportunities	Issues and Constraints	Possible Solutions
Environmental	•Slowing of habitat destruction through ecotourism	1) Lack of resources for key agencies 2) More successful ecotourism products needed	Dedicate ecotourism funds within GOP's allocation to DENR Focus external funding on priority protected areas
Management	•Development of a professional approach to managing protected areas for ecotourism •Establish a voluntary movement to assist in management of protected areas •Development of a professional ecotourism industry	•More personnel trained in ecotourism and protected area management; •Dominance of amateur organizations involved with providing ecotourism services;	Training Program for PAO & PAMB on ecotourism/resource management. GOP and external funding support for development of a professional ecotourism industry.
Socio-economic	•Recreational and educational opportunities to improve quality of life •Increased employment •Increased revenues from ecotourism activities.	•Dedication and cooperation required to establish successful ecotourism operations; •Conflicting interests in resource utilization.examples.	Raise awareness of the potentials and pitfalls of ecotourism for local communities. Focus on practical and realistic Adopt appropriate zoning instruments for resource allocation within and around protected areas.
Cultural	•Enrichment of cultural practices, values and indigenous knowledge •Possible or enhanced partnership between the indigenous peoples (IP) and other stakeholders •Improvement in IP's living condition.	•Perceived threat to indigenous culture from tourism •Possibility of exploitation of IPs	Well structured awareness workshops and/or training; Focus on relevant practical examples from elsewhere in the Philippines.
Institutional	•Promote multi-sectoral partnership/collaboration for ecotourism in protected areas	•Overlapping mandates of central and local government ("turf" issues)	Harmonize policies to complement projects/activities.

2.4 CULTURAL RESOURCE BASE

2.4.1 CULTURAL RESOURCES FOR ECOTOURISM

Ecotourism often combines cultural and natural resources in one product. For example, rafting the Chico or Cagayan Rivers becomes more than just an adventurous activity for overseas visitors or expatriates when villages are visited and stories told by local guides. Similarly, marine wildlife trips in the Tañon Strait are enhanced with stories of how local communities are working together to protect dolphins and whales.

Beyond “warmth and friendliness” and “hospitality and kindness”, the unique features of Filipino culture have not been fully emphasized as a tourism resource to motivate and attract overseas travelers to visit the Philippines. Business, visiting friends and relatives (VFR), general beach holidays and sightseeing remain the dominant travel motivations for the majority of visitors.

While there are distinctive examples of Filipino culture (such as festivals, fiestas, dancing, museums, churches, handicrafts, artwork and authentic traditional villages) the range of potential products is not matched to any great extent by visitors coming primarily in search of Filipino culture. Some unique features of Filipino culture are no doubt noticed by visitors, but this tends to show as “warmth and friendliness” in market surveys. By contrast, the domestic travel market is highly geared towards festivals, fiestas, regional cuisine and, to a lesser extent, museums and cultural ecotourism products.

Within this backdrop, it is important to consider the special characteristics of Filipino culture that can be integrated into ecotourism products.

2.4.2 KEY CULTURAL RESOURCES

Key cultural resources with current or potential adaptation for ecotourism are:

- Festivals and events
- Traditional villages
- Museums and cultural repositories
- Handicrafts, arts and crafts
- Local cuisine

A summary of these key cultural resources by region is provided in Table 2-2. It illustrates that festivals and events are still a major feature in the celebration of culture and the delivery of this to visitors in the Philippines. Museums are another important component followed by handicrafts, and arts and crafts outlets. Cultural villages, specially recreated for visitors, are not widespread. This may be indicative of market trends whereby visitors (domestic and international) prefer access to living villages and more authentic cultural experiences.

2.4.3 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Fiestas have a central role in daily life in the Philippines. One of the conditions that facilitated the conquest of the Philippine archipelago by its Spanish colonizers was the amorphous nature of the society, composed of small kinship units known as barangays. The fiesta became the irresistible magnet that drew the entire scattered population to the principal settlements where the parish churches were located at least three times a year: Holy Week, Corpus Christi, and the feast of the local patron saint. In modern economic terms, the fiesta represents four industries: leisure, travel, restaurant and entertainment. In his book “Fiesta,” anthropologist Alejandro Roces points out that “the lifeblood of the fiesta is the support of the traditional inhabitants of the locality. Like all living traditions, the fiesta has to gain the acceptance of every new generation. The Philippines’ pre-war “procession of processions”, La Naval de Manila, is now a non-event. On the other hand, two small town fiestas that the general public had never heard of till the 50’s have grown to spectacular proportions – the Moriones of Marinduque and the Ati-atihan of Aklan. They have now become top tourist attractions.”

Table 2-4: Regional Distribution of Key Cultural Resources

Region	Key Cultural Resources Festivals/ Events	Cultural Village	Museums/ Repositories	Handicrafts/ Arts/Crafts Centers	Cuisine/ Food
I	16	1	22	N/A	N/A
CAR	13	2	6	8	11
II	20	N/A	22	9	N/A
III	28	N/A	2	N/A	24
IV	91	21	22	39	34
V	26	N/A	5	N/A	N/A
VI	23	1	32	42	23
VII	52	N/A	21	N/A	22
VIII	31	1	2	2	8
IX	25	2	4	8	3
X	10	1	1	5	4
XI	16	N/A	9	7	9
XII	16	5	19	1	3
XIII	35	N/A	N/A	11	N/A

Source: DOT Regional Offices, 2001

2.4.4 CULTURAL VILLAGES

One of the earliest examples of a Philippines purpose-built cultural village is the Nayong Pilipino, a 32-acre attraction located next to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Childhood memories of Metro Manila students include a field trip to this “Little Philippines” that showcases replicas of the country’s leading tourist spots, shopping for souvenir items, seeing craft demonstrations and viewing cultural shows featuring regional songs, dramas and dances.

Such cultural villages were popularized in the 1970s and 1980s and to this day still serve a purpose. However, a significant number of cultural workers, historians and tourists have found these cultural villages too contrived to be truly reflective of Philippine culture. Since the early 1990s, a trend towards more authentic representations of cultural life has occurred. Villages such as Tam Awan, Baguio and the Talaandig School of Living Traditions, Bukidnon in Mindanao, have been developed as showcases for visitors and as centers for artists and crafts practitioners. They also have rehabilitation programs that teach young adults local craft skills and cultural traditions. Vigan in North Luzon, Silay in Negros and Intramuros in Manila are “real life” examples of Filipino cultural heritage that are becoming increasingly popular with both domestic and international visitors.

2.4.5 MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL ARCHIVES

The National Museum and National Historical Institute look after many museums and cultural archives. Foundations, churches and private families manage other collections of antiquities. Although a regional breakdown of museums and cultural repositories is too lengthy to be presented here, there are about 180 such attractions in the country. Most are located in cities and towns, and are not related to ecotourism areas.

2.4.6 HANDICRAFTS, ARTS AND CRAFTS CENTERS

The Philippines produces a wealth of world-class handicrafts. Some of the islands’ specialties could be redesigned using traditional techniques and materials but adapted to international market tastes.

Luzon is famous for the vast array of its handicrafts. These include sculpted pieces from Paete, wood filigree from Pakil, finely embroidered jusi and pina cloth from Lumban and Batangas, Ilocano blankets and traditional woven cloth, burnay pottery from Vigan, baskets from the mountain provinces, silver filigree from Baguio, abaca products like place mats, coasters and slippers from Bicolandia.

The Visayas region produces export-quality products. Cebu is known for its fashion accessories and rattan, bamboo and coral stone furniture; Bohol for its hand-woven mats, baskets, hats and bags; Bacolod for its children’s clothes, Negros Occidental for its pottery items like vases and ash trays, and the tikog mats from Basey, Samar.

Mindanao is known for its wide assortment of exotic goods including Maranao brass and bronze products, Yakan tapestries, Tiruray and Bagobo baskets, colorful woven cloth from the various indigenous cultural communities.

2.4.7 CUISINE AND FOOD

Food is one of the major preoccupations of the Filipino people, although international markets prefer local cuisine in other parts of Asia. Baguio serves the freshest fruits and vegetablee grown in nearby Trinidad Valley. Pampanga is known for its sweet meat the “tocino”, while Batangas is famous for its succulent beef “bulalo” and potent coffee. Bicol is a coconut-growing region and most of its popular cuisine use coconut milk and a potpourri of spices. Cebu and Palawan serve fresh seafood, seaweed salad and the sweetest mangoes. Iloilo is popular for its “pansit molo” and “la paz batchoy.” The town of Dagami,Leyte prides itself with “binagol” and the chocolate “moron”. Davao is famous for its “inihaw na panga” and exotic fruits like durian, pomelo, mangosteen and rambutan, while Zamboanga serves some of the most succulent prawns, crabs, lobsters and “curacha.”

2.4.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM

- Filipino culture has many distinguishing features yet these do not appear to be sought to any great extent by current international markets to the Philippines.
- Developing more “living” and “real” cultural products rather than purpose-built cultural villages and museums would respond to global trends for authenticity in ecotourism markets.
- Festivals, fiestas, regional cuisine and to a lesser extent, museums, churches and some cultural ecotourism products are important motivators for the domestic market.
- Philippines handicrafts would have more appeal to international markets if modern designs can be adapted using traditional methods and materials.
- Ecotourism products need to be developed and positioned in such as way as to help maintain and enhance Filipino culture.

2.5 MARKET ANALYSIS

2.5.1 TOURISM MARKET TRENDS IN THE PHILIPPINES
International Tourist Arrivals

International tourism arrivals in 2001 to the Philippines totaled 1.8 million and generated revenue of US\$2.2 billion (DOT). The general trend of arrivals over the past three years shows a general decline and no significant change in the source markets (Table 2-3). The 1997 Asian economic crisis negatively affected arrivals from main source markets. Coupled with the lingering effects of the crisis was the temporary shut down and subsequent reduction of services of Philippine Airlines. Recovery in 1999 was followed by a slump in arrivals due to the Sipadan and Palawan kidnapping incidents in 2000 and 2001, and cessation of air agreements between the Philippines and Taiwan. North American and European markets, which are sensitive to peace and order, have registered severe drops in arrivals due to the combined effects of global terrorist activity and the continuing security situation in the Philippines.

Table 2-5 shows that the number of visitor arrivals in 2001 declined by a rate of 9.8 percent over the same period in 2000. China, South Korea and Taiwan are the only major source markets showing positive growth in 2001.

Table 2-5: Tourism Arrivals to the Philippines 1996 to 2001

Country	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	% Change
United States	373,953	427,431	468,808	463,600	445,043	392,099	-11.9
Japan	350,242	367,714	361,631	387,513	390,517	343,840	-12.0
South Korea	173,910	170,087	81,979	133,068	174,966	207,957	18.9
Hong Kong	149,479	159,606	162,718	160,152	146,858	134,408	-8.5
Taiwan	206,708	246,370	185,869	143,810	75,722	85,231	12.6
Australia	87,553	93,949	85,655	77,732	75,706	68,541	-9.5
United Kingdom	83,513	95,044	97,704	88,920	74,507	60,147	-19.3
Canada	56,852	64,092	66,756	64,986	61,004	54,942	-9.9
Singapore	43,948	50,344	47,998	51,244	50,276	44,155	-12.2
Germany	60,367	62,595	64,207	62,044	51,131	40,605	-20.6
Malaysia	52,080	60,449	49,144	49,667	42,067	30,498	-27.5
China	15,757	19,093	24,252	21,220	14,724	18,937	28.6
France	21,027	24,089	25,909	24,462	19,179	13,918	-27.4
Other	373,978	381,660	426,727	442,096	370,469	301,615	-16.8
TOTAL	2,049,367	2,222,523	2,149,357	2,170,514	1,992,169	1,796,893	-9.8

SOURCE: DOT

International Visitor Profiles

The United States with 392,099 arrivals still ranks as the largest international market accounting for 22 percent of all arrivals to the Philippines in 2001. This represents about 14 percent of American arrivals to Asia. Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) (51 percent) and holiday (23 percent) are the main reasons for travel. As many of this market are Balikbayans, travel arrangements are made independently and tend not to be packaged.

Japan holds second place in terms of arrivals to the Philippines with 343,840 arrivals in 2001, representing 19 percent of all arrivals. As in previous years, Japanese travelers are mostly male (94 percent) and visit the Philippines on holiday. Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan rank 3rd, 4th and 5th, respectively. Travelers from these markets visit the Philippines for business, golf, beach holidays, gambling and diving. About half arrive packaged. More than half Singaporeans are travelling on business.

Western leisure markets (from Australian, UK, Canada, Germany, France) are generally seeking quality nature, adventure and cultural products in the Philippines. For example, the Australian market is evenly distributed among the holiday, VFR and business categories. All the traditional ecotourism markets are in decline in the Philippines.

General Patterns of Demand in the Philippines

The most recent visitor sample survey (2000) conducted by DOT shows that the majority of visitors from top source markets have come for a combination of beach holidays, sightseeing and shopping. Business is the second reason for travel, and VFR rank third. Scuba diving showed relatively insignificant figures.

Destinations most visited outside Manila are beach, golf and gambling destinations of Cebu and the Cavite – Laguna – Tagaytay – Batangas area. This can be attributed to their tourism-readiness, proximity and easy access from Manila. Arrivals from the US were more or less evenly spread out over several provinces, which can be attributed to their VHR majority purpose of visit. The German market is attracted by the more rustic destinations of Puerto Galera, Mindoro, Boracay and Palawan. For the northeast Asian markets, particularly Taiwan and Korea, Ilocos Norte, Cebu, Olongapo, and Tagaytay registered as the most frequented destinations, which can be attributed to the presence of casinos.

Ecotourism Tours

The inventory of ecotourism tours being sold based on nature, culture and adventure products compiled during the NES Study revealed a product mix of:

- 28 culture-based tours.
- 45 nature-based tours.
- 23 adventure-based tours.

The inventory takes an inclusive approach to ecotourism. The survey indicated that only 25 percent of tours are packaged by private tour operators while 70 percent are offered by either DOT or a provincial or municipal tourism office. Community cooperatives or clubs sells the remaining five percent. As the data are aggregated, some clubs or community tours may also be included within the tours offered by DOT or other government offices. It is possible the collection of the data was weighted towards DOT.

These results, however, strongly suggest that there is a major opportunity to increase the role of the private sector and community-based businesses in the provision of ecotourism products.

Market Segments Visiting the Philippines

The following market segments have been identified from tourism statistics, site data analysis, site observations, and discussions with travel industry operators as having

current interest and future potential for ecotourism products in the Philippines. They were then further developed from the ETWG survey “Profile of Ecotourism Products in the Philippines” submitted by DOT Regional offices.

Domestic Tourism Segments

- ***Families.*** Filipino families are usually day visitors who use private resorts, public beaches and theme parks during weekends and holidays. Families traveling together are common, and most include extended family members. Trips are usually to places an hour or two from home. Only a few destinations attract domestic visitors from further afield.
High-end Filipinos arrange trips over weekends to popular destinations such as Baguio and Batangas, and even places with an air travel component such as Cebu, Bohol and Palawan. These trips are usually individually arranged for two or three nights, and the party is composed of three to five family members. Security issues are a concern for these segments.
- ***Students.*** Student groups often take day trips relating to the school’s academic curriculum. Educational trips are most often an annual school undertaking, and cover primary and secondary levels. Travelling in busloads, students visit historical sites, science exhibits, factories, or museums, and end the trip with lunch and leisure time in a park. College students, however, travel in peer groups of five to 12, often crammed into one or two cars, going to the beach or mountains for a night or two.
- ***Club members.*** Mountain climbing, caving, scuba diving and mountain biking are currently the most popular association and club trips in the Philippines. Sports gear, dive shops and other outdoor equipment or similar specialty stores also host information on these activities. Some of the associations are college-based, making the general age group between 20 to 29 but many include young professionals. This club segment also includes office groups traveling for extra-curricular activities such as team-building workshops, fun-runs, and other social activities. Though most have planned programs and set activities to cover one day, some participants bring along friends or family and extend their visit.
- ***Pilgrims.*** Filipinos consider their hometown fiestas as good reasons to travel back home. They usually travel with peer groups or families, and stay in a relative or friend’s house for the duration of the festival or religious holiday such as Holy Week, All Soul’s Day and Christmas that is commonly three days. Some extend their visit to nearby tourism destinations. Pilgrims include groups who travel to undertake annual spiritual devotions (“panata”).

International Tourism Segments

- ***Balikbayans.*** These groups, mostly from North America, arrive as a family of four or five and sometimes with US friends. Though they used to stay in their relative’s homes, the trend recently is toward staying at inexpensive accommodation (pensions, inns) where they can cook their own meals and entertain guests. Balikbayans travel out of their hometowns and visit other tourist destinations. In recent years, Boracay, Cebu and Davao have been favorites.

- **International Travelers on Packaged Tours.** For high-capacity destinations (such as Cebu, Davao and Baguio) tourists arrange their accommodation, flights and transfers with a ground operator, pre-booked as a package in the source market. This type of travel used to be only typical of Westerners but now Japanese, Koreans and Hong Kong come pre-booked. The Taiwanese prefer packages, usually involving gaming. The new Chinese segments prefer packaged city tours. Pre-booked visitors from US and European source markets have matured from city tours to more nature-based experiences such as Ifugao and Palawan, but arrivals are declining.
- **Free and Independent Travelers.** FITs are most often seen carrying travel guide books (Lonely Planet) and at tourism offices requesting information on destinations, transportation and places to stay. They are mostly European who travel in small groups. FITs in Philippines tend to be budget-oriented, fairly adventurous, but prefer to travel without guides.
- **Scuba Diving.** Recreational diving has been one of the more stable niche markets of the country. With the development of diving organizations and the improvement of services, diving now captures more North Asians, who take packages from Cebu, Bohol and Palawan.
- **Other Special Interest Travelers.** These groups have been gaining ground collectively, although still do not register significant volume. Niche markets include a trickle of mountaineers, cavers, river runners and bird watchers. There are significant numbers of foreign religious visitors who come for seminars, conferences, outreach programs or as part of their vocational duties.

2.5.1 GLOBAL TRENDS AFFECTING ECOTOURISM

The Philippines needs to be aware of global ecotourism trends in order to usefully match product development to marketing.

Ecotourism Trends

In tourism circles, ecotourism and nature-based tourism have become widely acknowledged as a valuable part of a destination's product mix. Encompassing soft adventure, culture, activity, wildlife, village and rural tourism, ecotourism is based on the outdoors, usually in remote and unspoiled natural or cultural surroundings. Market interest in ecotourism has come about largely because awareness of the environment in which we live, concern for the fragility of the planet, and appreciation of traditional cultures have spread, over the last decade, from the concern of a few to a preoccupation among many educated travelers.

As interest in personal fitness and sport has grown, patterns of travel have changed from people who want to just come and look, to people who prefer to participate and understand. The world has become smaller, and improved accessibility, higher disposable incomes and increasing leisure time mean that more people expect to travel regularly. There is a trend for a number of "short break" trips during the year.

Many discerning travelers have "been everywhere" and the trend is for the mass markets to be fragmenting into niche and special interest markets seeking quality

experiences with specific themes such as nature, wildlife or adventure. Wildlife viewing in Borneo, trekking in the Himalaya and whale watching in New Zealand are the kind of holidays nature travelers take in the early 2000s. An important aspect to ecotourism trips is a concern for heritage and how local peoples live and interact with their cultural and natural environment.

Many visitors will pay well for a unique experience. Factors important to these fast growing market segments are that the products must be authentic and "real", there must be things to do and learn, and facilities must be relatively comfortable. Time is often a constraint so accessibility is important.

Ecotourism-seeking tourists are often in their 40s and upwards and traditionally come from Western Europe and North America with more recently from Japan. Other Asian nationalities are likely to follow the trend in the medium to long term. As a broad generalization, Europeans are observed to be seeking culture and lifestyle experiences, North Americans like wilderness and nature products, and Asian markets prefer to undertake specific adventure activities in the outdoors. Specialized tour wholesalers and operators have emerged in source markets to cater to these travelers, offering a depth of knowledge of a destination and experienced guiding. NTOs in Asia and the Pacific region have dedicated many millions of dollars in promotion to attract these strong and lucrative market segments. Prominent examples include recent successful campaigns in Thailand, Malaysia, the Mekong Region and Australia.

Quality Tourism

There is a general trend towards quality throughout the travel industry, as markets become more demanding, sophisticated and experienced. This means that today's travelers will pay for value enhanced products, but will seek value for money and quality services throughout the full range of tourism products, from budget to top end.

Independent Travelers (FITs)

Many of the world's growing FIT segments, some of whom are maturing away from the younger budget travelers, will also seek out nature tourism destinations, preferring a more flexible and individual style of travel but still demanding an authentic experience. Although some FIT segments may not wish to spend money on accommodation, research shows they will pay well for a unique ecotourism product or activity. Although a significant ratio of inbound leisure visitors travel independently without prior bookings, the Philippines is not receiving many of these "backpacker" FITs seeking nature destinations, probably due to perceived security constraints.

Regionalization

Taking a regional approach to tourism marketing by combining promotional efforts is now widely acknowledged as providing economies of scale, added value and sharing power unattainable by individual destinations. Advantages include the stretching of budgets, faster growth in destination awareness, greater media exposure, earlier product positioning, more effective branding and allegiance building, and more rapid penetration

into target markets. Opportunities for joint marketing in the Philippines could include regional ecotourism circuits with ASEAN, the Mekong countries, BIMP-EAGA and diving in the Sulu and Sulawesi seas.

Domestic Tourism

The fostering of domestic tourism is widely recognized as a means of keeping the tourism revenue at home, upgrading living standards and achieving national objectives. There is a growing realization that international tourism can contribute recreational, sport, leisure and educational facilities for host communities. Domestic segments are particularly valued as a stable source of business when international visitors fluctuate due to external influences.

2.5.2 ECOTOURISM TRENDS IN THE PHILIPPINES

General Trends

Although beach-based tourism remains mainstream in the Philippines, for the past few years, ecotourism has slowly been gaining attention. Private sector operators have noted that tourists from major source markets have matured from the city tours to more nature and adventure-based experiences. Several products have recently been highlighted for their environmental and cultural practices, partly as a reaction to the Boracay water pollution problem, which has deeply affected attitudes to tourism development within the Philippines. Palawan, for example, has focused on the conservation of its natural resources and capitalized on them as tourism attractions. There has been limited focus by private sector developers in coordination with LGUs. Provincial governments are increasingly recognizing ecotourism as a means for achieving local objectives. Constraints for development include a threatened and diminishing natural resource base, difficulties with partnerships among stakeholders, lack of product development, and poor linkages with the other sectors of the industry, particularly with regard to marketing and promotion.

Protected Area Visitors

Visitor arrivals to protected areas, natural parks and other adventure destinations were analyzed during the NES study. The most recent statistics from PAWB (1998) show that about 572,000 domestic and only 7,600 foreign tourists visited protected areas. Several of the sites, though nature parks, are highly urbanized and have been attracting excursionists and students on educational trips. For example, the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Nature Center in Quezon City accounted for 63 percent of total domestic visitors. Furthermore, in some areas visited by ETWG members, the monitoring of visitor arrivals has been less than perfect and many visitors are left uncounted making it hard to accurately understand protected area visitor patterns.

Ecotourism Case Studies

The number of visitors to some selected ecotourism destinations was examined during the NES study. Domestic segments and foreign residents in the Philippines were found to be extremely important to ecotourism destinations. International visitor numbers were found

to be generally low in relation to those received by neighboring competitive destinations. In addition, the recent downturn has meant that foreign visitor numbers have been dropping to most tourism destinations in the Philippines.

Examples include Camiguin Island in Northern Mindanao where 95 percent of all visitors are domestic. Filipino and foreign visitors (8,611 in 1999) have been dropping due to the devastating effects of security. In 2000 Bais dolphin and whale watching received 7,000 tourists of whom 251 were foreigners (USA, Korean and Japanese). Pinatubo trekking had been attracting between 200 to 300 persons monthly before the recent deterioration of the local security situation. Only about 1,000 tourists have visited Olango Island since community tour operations started in 1999, and the bulk were ecotourism study tours, rather than leisure tourists. About 9,000 tourists visited El Nido resorts in 2001 (down 10 percent from 2000), with recent downturns affecting all but Korean segments. The famous Puerto Princesa Underground River has seen more dramatic drops of 43 percent total visitors since 1997, with an average of about 20 percent being international. However, foreign visitors to this WHS in 2001 have declined by nearly half (48 percent) over 2000.

Forecasts of Ecotourism Demand

External events affecting tourism, such as 11 September 2001 and the war on terrorism, have negated the accuracy of many visitor projections worldwide. In the Philippines, the local security situation has exacerbated the lack of confidence of international and regional visitors, and is even affecting domestic tourism. The GOP forecast to achieve three million arrivals by 2004 is probably optimistic in the current climate. Until security issues are resolved and an atmosphere conducive to safe tourism is restored in the short-term, then parts of the Philippines are likely to continue to suffer. This applies particularly to ecotourism products, which often take place in remote and rural areas. Domestic markets are therefore likely to remain a mainstay for ecotourism in the short-term.

Looking at current trends, assessing Philippines' products against competitive destinations, and noting the drop in all international arrivals except from Korea, Taiwan and China, the immediate outlook for ecotourism from international visitors is not buoyant. Even domestic markets and the normally resilient expatriate segments are nervous about travelling within the country. On the positive side, the Philippines is well placed to see healthy growth in international visitors to ecotourism sites in percentage terms, because the numerical base is so low. This will be dependent however on successful product development and effective marketing. There is considerable commitment among stakeholders and the industry to use ecotourism to provide a more wholesome tourism image and attract a broader market mix.

International marketing needs to establish the Philippines as a recognized ecotourism destination. Products need to be developed to match market needs. Engaging and attracting the activity-driven Asian regional markets seeking soft adventure products should be a short- and medium-term priority for ecotourism development. These segments are likely to maintain their strength, and recover most quickly when security conditions improve. Forecasts for recovery from the Western markets, though traditionally interested in ecotourism activities, is likely to be more long-term and only after security improves, confidence is restored, and a commitment to resource protection is demonstrated.

2.5.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM

In summary, the NES' study of general travel patterns and ecotourism trends has revealed the following implications to ecotourism in the Philippines:

- Domestic visitors and Balikbayans are the country's main market for ecotourism. Although yielding a lower financial return the domestic market, composed of families, student groups, young professionals and pilgrims, is likely to remain significant.
- A campaign is needed to raise awareness of the importance of the environmental and ecotourism attractions in order to combat the lure of shopping malls and to attain long-term ecotourism management objectives.
- Asian visitors have the strongest market potential in the short to medium term, specifically Japan, Korea, Taiwan and China, although ecotourism products will need to be packaged to meet their needs.
- The Western ecotourism markets of North America, Europe and Australasia are likely to be more long-term in the Philippines until the security situation is resolved.
- Ecotourism products in the country need to be strengthened and enhanced, while new ecotourism attractions have to be created, in line with demand from target markets.
- Developing circuits and improved packaging with private sector operators will enable more appealing products to be offered for visitors.

2.6 TOURISM MARKETING

2.6.1 GOVERNMENT MARKETING

Destination marketing in the Philippines is coordinated by DOT and the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation (PCVC) along four main lines:

- Product research and development.
- Market research including statistics, surveys and studies.
- Formulation of marketing policies and plans.
- International and domestic promotions.

Product Market Research

There is a general lack of quality information about tourism source markets within DOT and PCVC. The link between analysis of market preferences and appropriate tourism product development remains weak. More information is also needed on activities undertaken during travel to the Philippines by source markets. A marketing plan is prepared annually and lays out the marketing policies, thrusts and directions to be taken in the major markets. As yet, no particular emphasis has been given to ecotourism.

Packaging

Whenever a potential site is deemed tourist-ready, a familiarization trip is conducted among the members of the Philippine tourism industry, particularly the tour operators. They are taken to inspect sites that are ready for selling, to coordinate with the destination's tourism operators, and to come up with a package and price ranges. Sometimes, if the product being offered is a repositioned or newly interpreted existing destination, packages are formulated by DOT and PCVC and introduced to tour wholesalers for sale and promotion.

Promotions

DOT and PCVC coordinate destination promotional events such as sales missions, travel marts and trade fairs. Private sector participants regularly cooperate in order to distribute evenly the business generated. PCVC participates in major trade fairs, such as ITB in Berlin, World Travel Mart in London and JATA in Japan. Multi-city sales missions often accompany these events. DOT overseas offices conduct presentations and sales calls to selected tour operators. Consumer promotions such as travel marts, food festivals in hotels, holiday events (such as Philippine Independence Day), cultural shows and fiestas are also conducted on a regular basis.

2.6.2 PRIVATE SECTOR MARKETING

As profit-oriented entities, the private sector engages in its own marketing of tourism products and packages. Hotels and resorts, for example, work with their chains for collective promotion efforts in target markets. Philippine tour operators cultivate direct links with their international partners. Private sector operators link promotional efforts with PCVC's destination marketing at trade fairs, travel marts, consumer events, sales missions and other promotional events. Two elected representatives sit in the PCVC Board of Trustees. Packaging and pricing is normally undertaken by the private sector. There are times when DOT and PCVC requests special rates for product campaign launches, off-season selling and crisis management.

2.6.3 MARKET IMAGES

With the country undergoing political and economic changes, the volatile tourism industry has kept its focus on general leisure and promotable business travel such as conventions and incentives. The destination image is rooted in island and beaches, supplemented by rich culture and history. Overcoming negative images associated with "girls, golf and gambling" remains a priority. There has never been any attempt to attract ecotourism visitors to the Philippines, such as those featured in campaigns of Thailand and Malaysia.

Frequent changes in promotional campaigns and lack of funding have hindered the establishment of a strong tourism image for the Philippines. "WOW Philippines" is the current promotional campaign, launched in early 2002. WOW, for Wealth of Wonders, uses four images: the tarsier, Puerto Princesa Underground River, wreck dive site, and Boracay beach. The current "Volunteer 12", (V12) is a Balikbayan program to boost VFR and international travel to the Philippines.

2.6.4 COMPETITIVE DESTINATIONS

Other South East Asian countries with similar ecotourism products are the country's principal competitors. Tours from the main markets of France, UK, Australia and Japan were analyzed, and similar products and prices compared. Philippines tours are generally competitively priced. For example, Palawan, Banaue, Chocolate Hills, volcano treks and tribal village visits are offered as low cost destinations in source markets when compared with other Asian tours.

Despite this, destination appeal is limited. Officials from the DOT office in the UK state that the Philippines is looked at as "emerging and sometimes even unusual destination".

For example, despite Vietnam's lack of infrastructure and promotion, it is outpacing the Philippines in terms of attractiveness and "mystique".

There is proven demand for ecotourism products in other parts of Asia. Nepal, for example, attracts 120,000 international visitors for trekking in the Himalaya. In 2001, 40,000 people climbed to the summit of Mt. Kinabalu in Sabah, Malaysia, about half of whom were foreigners. The forests and hot springs of Kinabalu National Park itself had 330,000 visitors, over 100,000 being international segments.

By comparing promotional materials and websites within the markets, it is clear that the Philippines is not yet competing effectively with Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia in ecotourism. These countries have established a nature-based branding of promotions in order to spin away from the over-competitive "sun, sand and sea" attractions. They are already on their second wave of ecotourism products, with materials made exclusively for ecotourism destinations and packages, while the Philippines has yet to develop its initial ecotourism circuits.

2.6.4 ECOTOURISM MARKETING

Ecotourism marketing in the Philippines is still in its infancy. Existing international promotional activities target the general leisure market, with occasional participation in dive shows. Even within the Philippines general awareness of ecotourism is low. There may be upcoming projects such as white-water rafting and other nature-based activities but local tour operators seem to find difficulty in coordinating tours and coming up with effective and profitable packages. The RECs have to address the need to create awareness among local communities and forge collaboration with the private sector to develop areas for ecotourism.

2.6.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM

Much has yet to be done in marketing terms to fully harness the potential of ecotourism. Programs need to be designed in order to achieve the following:

A market research information base for ecotourism needs to be established to further understand:

- Tourist volumes and growth to specific sites and protected areas, and collectively growth in tourist visits engaged in nature-based and ecotourism activities
- Demographic profile of visitors
- Other travel-related information, such as travel arrangements, source of destination knowledge, average daily expenditure and length of stay.
- Information about current and potential ecotourism market segments
- Further market segment details for both promotional thrusts and product development directions.

In terms of positioning, coastal resources and diving in the Philippines are likely to have the greatest competitive edge to attract quality international markets.

- Promotions specific to ecotourism, using Banner Sites, will refresh and focus the international market image and attract higher-yield quality markets.
- Establish linkages between Key Sites for product development and marketing, and with the private sector for packaging and promotions.
- A monitoring system is needed so ecotourism marketing objectives can be compared to actual results to enable the effective targeting of strategies, as required.

2.7 TRANSPORT

2.7.1 VISION IN THE TOURISM MASTER PLAN

The Tourism Master Plan (TMP) laid out the policy of developing three development clusters of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Each cluster would be served by one or two major international gateways and linked to a variety of satellite destinations. This required an adjustment of policy in the air transport sector and necessitated the:

- Adoption of a more flexible approach in approving inbound air charters and providing scheduled air services on the part of other carriers.
- Designation of new domestic and international carriers to service secondary airports in the country.
- Expansion of domestic and international terminal facilities.
- Deregulation of domestic air operations to foster greater competition on routes.

The TMP's main thrust with water and land transportation was the upgrading and development of road connections between air and seaports, and tourism centers, better known as the inter-modal transport system. Focus was also given to the development of inter-island cruising for foreign markets, and the improvement of domestic ferry services in the Philippines.

2.7.2 CURRENT SITUATION

Major policy shifts in air, water and land transportation were initiated to address critical bottlenecks in trade, industry, tourism and investments. Development thrusts during the past five years have leaned towards liberalization and deregulation, resulting in the expansion of transport systems supporting regional growth areas, zones and corridors. The three original tourism development clusters have since been expanded to include Laoag/Baguio, Clark/Subic, Manila, Cebu and Davao.

Air

The Philippines' main international air access is through the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) in Manila. NAIA is currently being serviced by approximately 34 airlines. Travelers can also enter the Philippines via Cebu. The Mactan-Cebu International Airport handles both regular and charter flights from Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea while Davao International Airport receives flights from Singapore and Manado, Indonesia. Laoag International Airport in North Luzon services flights from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Guangzhou.

Philippine Airlines (PAL) the national flag carrier, services a route network of 18 on-line points in 12 countries, and seven points in four countries on joint service basis with other airlines. This includes daily services from Manila to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Singapore. In terms of weekly air seats, the Philippines lags behind ASEAN neighbors. In 1999 the Philippines had 106,657 weekly air seats, lower than Malaysia (299,409), Thailand (310,491) and Singapore (359,314).

Liberalization of the aviation industry in 1995 allowed for new domestic and international airlines that now service routes once dominated by PAL. The progressive liberalization policy adopted has proven to be beneficial, especially in the domestic sector. The traveling public now enjoys a choice of several airlines, and lower fares as a result

of increased competition. The number of domestic air passengers grew by an average of 5.37 percent from 1996 to 2000. In terms of infrastructure, the opening of the NAIA Terminal II relieved congestion in the old Terminal I. NAIA Terminal III is due to open December 2002 at a cost of US\$500 million. The runway of Davao International Airport was upgraded and lengthened and can now accommodate larger aircraft.

In general, direct air access to some of the more remote but popular ecotourism areas such as El Nido, Palawan, Siargao and Batanes Islands, has improved along with better linkages between air and sea transport schedules.

Water

The liberalization and deregulation of the shipping industry reduced monopolies and expanded services, benefiting both passengers and operators. The domestic shipping industry has undergone major improvements, enabling the Philippine seas to be traversed by bigger, faster, more sophisticated and reliable vessels. The private sector responded by replacing their fleets, and upgrading and replacing alternative services such as fast ferries and luxury liners. However, more stringent safety regulations for the vessel, the crew and shore management are needed.

Land

Road access to ecotourism sites has improved in the last decade. Donor agencies have been largely responsible for funding improvements to the Philippines' highway network. Access to and within the five major hubs has led to a noticeable increase in use in some areas, such as Subic and Batangas.

2.7.3 FUTURE PLANS

The Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) for 2001-2004 outlines future prospects for the transportation system.

Air

The country's accessibility to visitors will be improved by negotiating more and better air service agreements (ASAs) with partner countries to increase weekly air seat capacity to levels at par with ASEAN neighbors. Air carriers of countries with which the Philippines has bilateral ASAs will be encouraged to maximize utilization of their entitlements. A "trigger mechanism" will be institutionalized to facilitate the operation of additional seat capacity beyond the entitlement allowed in the pertinent ASA. This will allow an airline already operating at an average load factor of 70 percent to add more seats to immediately respond to demand increase without the need for re-negotiation. The upgrading of domestic airports to international standards will improve domestic linkages.

Water

Major port development and modernization projects will be undertaken during 2001-2004, particularly in Batangas, Iloilo, Davao, General Santos, Zamboanga, Manila North and South Harbor, as well as Cagayan de Oro, Capi and Albay.

Land

Local roads shall be planned and developed to complement national roads, especially in improving access to priority tourism areas.

2.7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM

Access is a key component to the successful establishment of tourism flows. However, experience shows that some visitors to ecotourism destinations are prepared to overcome transportation difficulties if the resource warrants, for example Tubbataha and Batanes. The following interventions will play a role in helping establish successful ecotourism in the Philippines:

- Improved international air access linkages and competitive airfares.
- Convenient proximity of regional airports to ecotourism destinations and protected areas.
- Availability of regular fast ferry services.
- Frequency of scheduled flights, shipping and bus trips.
- General upgrading of transport services throughout the country.

2.8 ACCOMMODATION

2.8.1 TOURIST FACILITIES

Tourist accommodation facilities in the Philippines range from economy and luxury hotels and resorts with complete amenities, to budget tourist inns and family-run home stays.

The total number of accommodation establishments increased from 2,281 in 1994 to 3,816 in 1998, a growth rate of 67 percent. The hotel sector increased by 49 percent, resort sector by 145 percent while tourist inns and apartels grew by 32 percent and 34 percent, respectively. Of the total accommodation establishments in 1998, hotels accounted for 46 percent, resorts for 35 percent, tourist inns for 17 percent and apartels for three percent

This expansion of the accommodation sector can be attributed to growing demand for hotels due to increased visitor traffic. Events such as APEC in 1996 modernized and expanded hotels capacity, particularly in Manila. The declaration of Visit Philippines Year in 2003 is expected to stimulate demand. The current downturn in visitor arrivals means there is plenty of accommodation capacity for tourism. Accommodation facilities have survived by turning to the meetings and conference markets, especially among domestic segments. Research has indicated that domestic leisure travelers' selection of hotels is affected mainly by competitive pricing and services.

In terms of regional distribution, data from DOT regional offices (Table 2-4) show that the National Capital Region (NCR), Central Luzon (Region III), Southern Tagalog (Region IV), Western Visayas (Region VI), and Central Visayas (Region VII) account for the greatest number of accommodation establishments. The hotel sector is largely concentrated in the Metro Manila area, reflecting its role as the national capital and main international gateway. The resort sector is generally dispersed outside Metro Manila with Regions IV, VI, VII and XI accounting for the most number of resorts.

Table 2-4: Accommodation by Region

Region	No. of Establishments
NCR	208
CAR	187
I	95
II	142
III	371
IV	213
V	116
VI	401
VII	203
VIII	73
IX	38
X	89
XI	193
XII	58
XIII	69
TOTAL	2,445
Source: DOT	

While tourist accommodation facilities are generally available in the country's main destinations, facilities within and around ecotourism sites such as protected areas are very few, if any. Of more than 200 protected areas identified by DENR, only a few offer basic lodging facilities, while some are limited for use by park staff. Small ecotourism lodges as found elsewhere in Asia (such as Thailand, Nepal, Indonesia) do not exist to the same extent in the Philippines. However, villages around protected areas sometimes offer home stays for more adventurous travelers. A limited number of camps and cabins (for instance, Eden Resort near Davao City) in semi-natural settings have been developed over the last five years. Again, there are fewer of these than in neighboring countries.

2.8.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM

- With the growing interest in ecotourism in the Philippines, the following needs consideration:
- Planning for the construction of accommodation in or near Key Sites.
 - There is a need for sensitive, creative local design for accommodation in ecotourism areas in line with market demands.
 - The DOT Homestay Program can be further encouraged, especially in ecotourism areas.
 - Linkages between DOT and LGUs for licensing and accreditation standards could be strengthened.

2.9 SUPPORT SERVICES

2.9.1 INTRODUCTION

To ensure the safety, comfort and convenience of visitors to ecotourism sites, development of various support services, including basic utilities such as water, electricity, sewerage and garbage disposal, information and interpretation are needed.

2.9.2 UTILITIES

About 40 percent of areas along major highways leading to ecotourism sites are well served with public telecommunication facilities. The advent of new telecommunication technology such as cellular phones has provided access even in remote parts of the country. Currently, satellite phones are also being introduced at a reasonable cost to cover distant areas.

Electricity is available in densely populated areas. Due to high power costs, the distribution of electricity in remote areas is limited. The government is seeking to address this issue through the privatization of the National Power Corporation and, thus, the generation, distribution and supply aspects of the electric industry.

Water supply service in far-flung areas such as protected areas and other ecotourism sites is limited. Most of the existing ecotourism sites do not have established sewage systems.

2.9.3 GENERAL TOURIST INFORMATION

Maps and guidebooks for tourists are distributed in various tourism information counters and hotel lobbies as well as the regional offices of the DOT. Other guidebooks such as Lonely Planet, Action Asia Adventure, Philippines Guidebook and the like can be found in major bookstores. In general, there is a lack of specific accurate information on ecotourism areas for visitors in the Philippines.

As many visiting segments are interested to learn about the area they are visiting, there is a need for improved interpretation including better maps, published material and systems of local guides, especially for Key Sites. There are opportunities to make links between academic institutions and natural history information available for visitors.

2.9.4 RESCUE AND MEDICAL SERVICES

Organized professional and volunteer rescue services in the Philippines are in the early stages of development. The National Disaster Coordinating Council spearheads rescue operations during national emergencies and calamities. Other organizations such as the Red Cross and Philippine Air Force's 505 Rescue Team provide rescue services. The Bureau of Fire and Protection is in the process of institutionalizing rescue operations under special units in the provinces. Currently there are five established rescue centers in Subic Bay, Manila, Cebu, Cavite and Pasay City.

In some ecotourism activities such as diving, safety standards are taken seriously. Most resorts have good equipment and well-trained instructors and dive masters. To

date, there are three recompression chambers in the country, in Manila, Subic and Cebu, while a fourth one in Batangas has been proposed.

Health care systems in the Philippines are generally good and with reasonable fees. Manila offers world-standard medical facilities (Makati Medical Center and St. Luke's Hospital in Quezon City are generally acknowledged as the best in the country). Major cities outside Manila have well-equipped hospitals and can diagnose and treat most injuries and illnesses. Provincial capitals have hospitals with equipment and supplies that are adequate for minor cases. Most municipalities have Rural Health Units staffed by a doctor and a nurse, though several towns may share one doctor in remote areas.

2.9.5 SECURITY

A major issue concerning the development of ecotourism in the country is security. Events such as the Sipadan and Palawan kidnappings and crime stemming from urban poverty have led to an increase in security operations in most large urban areas. Increasing publicity about these incidents and the Philippines linkages with terrorist networks has deterred many international source markets, and even affected the travel patterns of Filipinos. Some former tourism spots and many potential ecotourism destinations cannot be developed due to security concerns. Only when solutions to these issues are found can tourism be expected to flourish in the Philippines.

2.9.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM

- Solutions are needed with regard to security. This might include strengthened institutionalized linkages and coordination with authorities with regard to security.
- There is a need for rescue operations and standard operating procedures in case of emergencies and accidents for ecotourism activities such as climbing, caving and rafting.
- Additional recompression chambers are needed in dive sites in order for them to reach their full potential as international dive destinations.
- Physical facilities such as observation platforms, view decks, and comfort rooms are needed at ecotourism sites.
- Improved interpretation and visitor information is needed, especially at Key Sites. Published material, maps and a system of local guides would improve the visitor experience.
- Establishment of ecologically sound garbage and sewage disposal systems are needed in ecotourism sites.

2.10 IMPACTS

2.10.1 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM

The 1991 TMP reported that the Philippines natural and cultural environment have been substantially altered by human activity. Much of the forest cover in the mountains and foothills has disappeared and a considerable proportion of the coastal mangroves has been removed for fishpond construction. Destructive fishing techniques and lack of clear coastal resource management guidelines is leading to over-fishing, and threatens

to reduce the diversity and stability of marine resources. These issues are inextricably linked to poverty, over population and competing land uses.

The following case study examples illustrate the practical and positive impacts that can arise from ecotourism. There are also a number of practical examples that illustrate the importance of managing adverse impacts and learning lessons from past experiences.

Olango Island

Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary, situated 5.5 kilometers east of Mactan Island near Cebu is a protected wetland with international importance due to the high number of migratory bird species. With assistance from USAID, the Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP) of DENR, Olango Island Bird and Seascape Tour (OBST) was developed since 1997 as a community-based tourism operation that provides alternative livelihood for island residents.

About 1,000 tourists have taken the Birds and Seascape Tour since operations started in 1999 (Japan and North American among other markets). The tour is managed and operated by members of two villages who formed themselves into a cooperative. With systematic planning and coordination with the villagers, the project has been successful in helping the community become real stewards of their environment, and created pride and self respect in promoting their area as an ecotourism destination, while generating alternative revenue.

Tubbataha Reef

One of the best destinations for scuba diving in the country, the famous Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park is a World Heritage Site. Attracting international markets, Tubbataha generates around P1.6 million in fees and permits annually during its three-month dive season. Good management has engaged the active participation of various stakeholders in protection and tourism, supported by WWF KKP, LGUs, Philippines Navy, coastguard and other concerned agencies, to ensure the sustainable use of the marine resources. Alongside protection efforts, affected communities are provided seed funding for local livelihoods and training on coastal resource management.

Donsol Whale Shark Encounters

Whale sharks are the largest fish in the world and grow up to 20m long. Congregating in the coastal waters of Donsol in Sorsogon, whale sharks are threatened because of the strong demand for their meat and fins. Their capture was banned only in 1998. WWF KKP introduced the concept of ecotourism to the community to promote the protection of whale sharks as well as to derive local benefits.

Ecotourism activity in Donsol has created an awareness to conserve the whale shark among the local community, and contributed to a national conservation strategy. However, significant local benefits have yet to devolve to the community due to competition between village operators and a low profile in the market place. Whale shark hunting in other parts of the Philippines and the region threatens the future of the resource, yet based

on global trends in marine mammal watching Donsol has substantial potential to become “must see” product for nature and adventure travelers.

2.10.2 ECONOMIC IMPACTS AND ECOTOURISM

There are community-based tourism projects and resort developments that have created positive economic benefits for local residents. Selected case studies illustrate this:

Pinatubo Trekking

Trekking to the crater-lake of Pinatubo Volcano is a popular ecotourism activity that has provided economic opportunities to the residents of Barangay St. Juliana in Capas, Tarlac Province. A DOT-organized community-managed visitor center arranges a roster of guides and porters including local Aetas. Estimated visitor arrivals range from 200 to 300 persons monthly, with an average expenditure of P2,000 per tourist. The bulk of the amount that tourists pay directly to the cooperative goes to transportation, food, porters and guides, and community and environmental fees.

Bais Dolphin and Whale Watching Tours

The Bais dolphin and whale watching tours organized by Bais City LGU in the Tañon Strait has successfully brought revenue to local communities. Started as an environmental education exercise by Silliman University, marine biologists and a very active LGU, the tour office now takes reservations, charters boats, arranges guides, and monitors marine mammal activity. The area is a marine mammal highway with whales and dolphins migrating to join resident species due to the large amounts of pelagic fishes. Five specially converted pump boats (two LGU-operated and three privately owned) are available daily throughout the year. The average percentage of dolphin sightings by visitors is very high (over 90 percent) and whales can be sighted throughout much of the year. In 2000 the operation handled a total of nearly 7,000 tourists of whom 251 were foreigners (USA, Korean and Japanese). Revenue from the tour has shown consistent growth since inception in 1996, with P1.8 million gross received in 2000.

El Nido Resorts

Large-scale resort developments that adhere to principles of ecotourism can be an effective and sustainable means of providing continuous benefits to the community. Ten Knots, a company that operates two resorts in El Nido Managed Resource Protected Area, have created a symbiotic relationship with the community. The operation established the El Nido Foundation that helps the community develop a variety of business and development opportunities, including its own capacity for attracting and supporting tourism.

The El Nido Foundation was established in 1994 to provide financing assistance for small cooperatives and micro-enterprises and has since granted loan assistance of over P2 million to 500 beneficiaries, either individuals, working groups or associations. Typical projects of the Foundation for the community include small retail stores and stalls, and high intensive farming techniques to increase productivity to supply the demand for fresh food required by the resorts.

One of El Nido Foundation's beneficiaries, Ms. Susan Lualhati said, “... it has helped the community and the environment by enhancing the ability of the local people to share the benefits of tourism. Now, the link between economic development and environmental protection is obvious to all of us.”

Puerto Princesa Underground River

In 2001, 22,613 total visitors were received at the Underground River World Heritage Site (a 31 percent decline from 2000) of whom 83 percent were domestic and 17 percent were foreign nationals. International visitors dropped by 48 percent to 3,933 visitors in 2001, down from 7,501 in 2000.

Tourists contribute P3.7 million in revenue from cave entry, park entrance and cottages. Other benefits generated by tourism go directly to business operators in the area, many of whom are local community members such as boatmen and guides.

2.10.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM

Tourism can generate both positive and negative impacts on environmental and socio-cultural values. Successful ecotourism is likely to occur in the Philippines when:

- Communities have been involved from the initial stages to the operational stages.
- Partnerships with private sector tour operators and resorts have been formed with the local community.
- The financial return from ecotourism can be an effective incentive to protect the resource base.

2.11 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

2.11.1 OVERVIEW

In 1998, employment in the tourism sector reached P3.37 million, an improvement of 32 percent from the total employment generated by tourism in 1994 of P2.55 million (Table 2-5). Of this total, the transport sector had the biggest share of 80 percent, restaurants and eateries 15 percent, travel agents / tour operators / tour guides 10 percent, and hotel and lodging four percent.

Table 2-5: Employment by Sector 1994 and 1998

Tourism Sector	1994			1998		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Hotels etc.	102,755	67,221	35,531	116,835	76,433	40,222
Restaurants etc.	385,623	223,777	161,846	528,582	306,736	221,846
Transport	2,062,647	1,821,431	241,216	2,720,008	2,401,916	318,092
Travel Agents, Tour Operators & Tour Guides	2,759	1,658	1,102	3,639	2,186	1,453
TOTAL	2,553,784	2,114,087	439,695	3,369,064	2,787,271	581,613

Source: NSO

It is estimated that a very small fraction of the tourism workforce is involved with ecotourism operations and currently there are no formal ecotourism training programs in the country. However, an ecotourism elective is being considered by the Asian Institute of Tourism (AIT). Tourism training in general is provided by a mix of public training institutions, such as the AIT, private schools, and in-house training facilities at hotels and travel agencies. The Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) offers training and certification for hotel and restaurant industry entry-level positions.

It is not too surprising then that there are very few full-time, professional ecotourism personnel in the Philippines. Amateur and part-time clubs, associations and individuals with other sources of income make up a large proportion of those working in the field of ecotourism.

In terms of training and standards of service there has been good progress made between amateur organizations and DOT. Training modules and accreditation systems have been established for mountain guiding and cave guiding. To date, a total of 257 mountain guides and cave guides have participated in seminars conducted in Kalinga, Banaue, Tuguegarao, Kidapawan and Bacolod. Other relevant DOT training programs in the Philippines include homestay programs, ecotourism awareness programs and seminars for boatmen. The development of standards for river rafting is currently underway by DOT, facilitated by rafting instructors from the US. Fifteen rafting guides are involved with this program.

2.11.2 TRAINING NEEDS

While the focus of this section has been on personnel working in the industry, the introduction of EO 111 has created additional training needs by the creation of the NESC, ETWG and the RECs. Thus, training needs can be divided into at least two distinct categories:

- Those working in the industry as ecotourism guides or business owners and managers;
- Those involved with planning for or managing ecotourism at local, regional and national levels.

Although some degree of overlap will occur, training needs will differ between these two categories.

2.11.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM

- Ecotourism in the Philippines is emerging slowly from a largely part-time, amateur sector to become a full-time professional industry;
- Training needs differ between those working in the industry (part-time or full-time) to those involved with planning for and managing ecotourism at local, regional and national levels;
- Generally, there is an urgent need to deliver professional training to people working as ecotourism guides and business owners/operators.

3.1 PRINCIPLE FOR ECOTOURISM

The foundation for ecotourism in the Philippines is viewed not as an imported concept, which term and basic idea came from other places, but on its direct relevance to real needs and current circumstances. Hence, the emphasis of the NES is on promoting “ecotourism for the Philippines,” not “Philippines for ecotourism.”

As agreed in the Bohol Congress, *“the State shall develop and promote ecotourism as a tool for sustainable development to support the development, management, protection and conservation of the country’s environment, natural resources and cultural heritage. The State shall establish an integrating system to focus greater efforts to sustain the viability of ecotourism development in the country.”*

This statement provides the basis for developing ecotourism as a tool for sustainable tourism development. In addition, the Bohol Congress also defined ecotourism as *“a form of sustainable tourism within a natural and cultural heritage area where community participation, protection and management of natural resources, culture and indigenous knowledge and practices, environmental education and ethics, as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host communities and the satisfaction of visitors.”*

“Ecotourism for the Philippines” rest on the following pillars that will facilitate the promotion and development of ecotourism as it relates to real needs for:

- Sustainable management of natural and cultural resources
- Environmental education and conservation awareness
- Empowerment of local communities to participate in and benefit from tourism
- Development of ecotourism products that satisfy visitors and position the Philippines as a globally competitive ecotourism destination

3.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The NES is founded on a vision to advocate, foster, coordinate, monitor and mobilize support for ecotourism. The EO 111 Bodies will not themselves seek to become the sole implementing agents of ecotourism but rather they will achieve their goals by encouraging and guiding LGUs, national government agencies and other stakeholders to develop ecotourism. In addition, they will advance the cause of ecotourism by promoting actions by the private sector, NGOs and other interest groups from tourism and environment sectors.

At the Bohol Congress, the vision for ecotourism in the Philippines is *to develop a globally competitive but distinct Philippine tourism characterized by a balanced ecosystem and a well-preserved culture and indigenous knowledge systems and practices which are nurtured by committed, empowered, responsive and gender-sensitive stakeholders for the benefit of present and future generations.*

Accordingly, the Congress adopted the mission to *position the Philippines as a globally competitive ecotourism destination anchored on sustainable development where the use, development and protection of the country's natural resources and environment as well as the preservation and management of cultural heritage are given priority consideration for the benefit of present and future generations.*

The goals, therefore, for ecotourism will be to develop globally competitive ecotourism products, develop responsible ecotourism markets, and to optimize community benefits and enhance the quality of visitor experience.

To this end, initiatives will be pursued to strengthen local leadership, institutionalize community participation, facilitate domestic and foreign investments, promote environmental education and ethics, instill nationalism and harness local entrepreneurship and multi-stakeholder partnership, towards the upliftment of the quality of life of host communities and the enrichment of visitor experience.

3.3 APPROACHES

3.3.1 “TOP-DOWN, BOTTOM-UP”

The general approach to achieve the NES goals and objectives will involve a combination of “top-down” element to create flows of assistance downward from central government, and “bottom-up” element aimed at stimulating grass-roots participation.

The EO 111 Bodies will be the key players in “top-down” process to focus, combine, coordinate and monitor government initiatives in support of ecotourism. Specifically, the “top down” process will:

- focus on developing, managing and marketing the network of key ecotourism sites; and
- set standards to regulate and monitor ecotourism operation.

The “bottom-up” process aims to create mechanisms for nurturing ecotourism development through community initiatives, local entrepreneurship and private sector participation.

3.3.2 NETWORKING

Facilitating technical and financial support will be vital in achieving an integrated and coordinated effort for ecotourism development. In this regard, two types of networking are envisaged for the NES.

The first type of networking pertains to the linking of key sites based on similarity and complementarity of products to be offered to visitors. This networking aims to mobilize the RECs and other stakeholders to pool resources and develop tour circuits or itineraries as well as undertake cooperative programs. It will not only help disperse economic benefits from ecotourism and uplift the social conditions of the host communities within and outside of the key sites but also increase consciousness among stakeholders to conserve, protect and preserve the natural environment and cultural heritage of a destination.

Another type is the establishment of a communication network aimed at facilitating the sharing of ideas and information as well as exchange of techniques and best practices

in developing ecotourism products. Initially, this networking will begin as a list of e-mail and postal addresses of individuals and organizations actively involved in or keenly interested in ecotourism. The EO 111 bodies will set-up the network through publication of regular newsletter as medium for sharing data and experiences, and the development of a website to enhance the networking process.

The primary rationale of networking is to serve as a mechanism for sharing experiences and building professionalism at the national and local levels. Mobilizing private sector and grass roots participation will be key in expanding the network. Networking within sub-groups will be encouraged. Once an effective communication is established, the network can also become a means to spread information and to identify worthy projects for donor agencies support.

The long-term goal will be to establish the network as a means to deliver technical assistance to projects at grass-roots level.

4.1 COORDINATING AND FOCUSING GOVERNMENT EFFORTS

The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has clearly demonstrated its commitment and willingness to foster ecotourism by implementing EO 111. Establishing the NEDC, NESC and RECs has resolved to harness and create effective working relationships between those who manage resources and those who plan tourism. The concept of a formal partnership between government's resource managers and tourism planners, as mandated in EO 111, is unparalleled in other countries. It, therefore, provides an excellent base to develop and implement the NES.

Limited funding at government agency level is a reality that the NES has to consider now and in the immediate future. Rather than assume that special government funding source can be created for ecotourism, the emphasis will be on achieving maximum results from available funding sources by focusing and coordinating the efforts of agencies that can support ecotourism. In addition, the EO 111 Bodies will seek to create an efficient project implementation mechanism in order to attract funding from international sources with interest in conservation and ecotourism.

While there is widespread public enthusiasm for ecotourism, a strong support will be fundamental to its development and promotion. The NES will, therefore, need a political champion to create a sense of urgency and establish the political will for concerted effort to foster ecotourism.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) – Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) partnership will be critical in advocating for ecotourism in the key sites, taking every possible opportunity to push the cause of ecotourism using political support from the highest possible levels. In addition, DOT-DENR will lead a program of technical assistance to key sites, under the guidance of the NEDC and NESC. This program will be funded through existing budgetary allocations from the DENR and the DOT, with additional support from donor agencies.

DOT's component of the NES will focus on international and domestic promotion, planning and product development, training and awareness. DENR's component of the NES will focus on resource management, livelihood programs, extension services, training, monitoring and managing impacts.

4.2 ROLE OF THE EO 111 BODIES

The main responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the NES will rest with the EO 111 Bodies, to wit:

NATIONAL ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (NEDC)

The NEDC's role will be to provide the policy direction for ecotourism guided by the NES as basic framework in formulating policies, guidelines, rules and regulations. Any changes to the NES will have to be approved by the NEDC.

NATIONAL ECOTOURISM STEERING COMMITTEE (NESC)

The NESC, as the working committee of the NEDC, will have the following responsibilities:

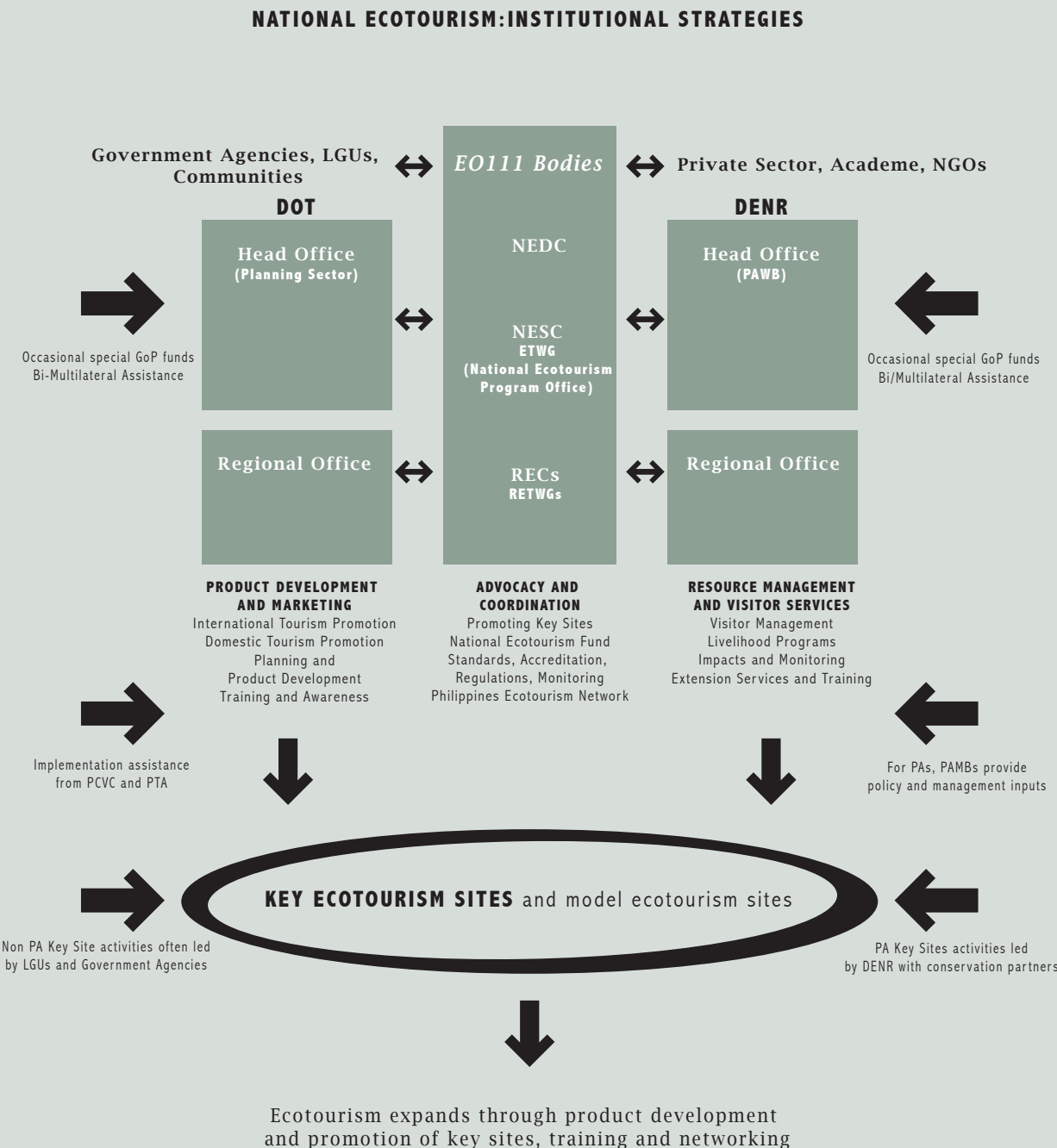
- Review progress through regular reports from RECs and other implementing agencies;
- Advocate the key sites concept and promote banner sites as images for international and domestic tourism promotion;
- Approve action plans for ecotourism development in the key sites;
- Encourage the RECs to undertake product development and marketing within and along the networks of key sites;
- Undertake assessment of projects for accreditation;
- Approve major ecotourism projects;
- Lobby for the enactment of legislations in support of ecotourism;
- Facilitate the continued operation of NEPO;
- Oversee the establishment and administration of the National Ecotourism Fund;
- Institutionalize the Philippine Ecotourism Network;
- Create a pool of experts to provide technical assistance in developing ecotourism projects; and
- Coordinate with concerned agencies/ institutions/ organizations in the implementation of the NES.

REGIONAL ECOTOURISM COMMITTEES (RECS)

The RECs will have the following responsibilities in the implementation of the NES at the regional level:

- Prepare action plans for ecotourism development at key sites for approval of the NESC;
- Advocate and promote the key sites in coordination with concerned agencies/ institutions/ organizations;
- Provide advice and assistance in the development of key sites.
- Network with other RECs in joint product development and marketing within and along the network of key sites;
- Approved minor ecotourism projects;
- Recommend legislation, agenda and proposal to the NESC in support of ecotourism development;
- Lobby for the enactment of ordinances and resolutions in support of ecotourism at the local levels;
- Encourage application to the National Ecotourism Fund; and
- Promote membership to the Philippines Ecotourism Network.

Figure 4-1



ECOTOURISM TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS (ETWGS)

Technical working groups will need to be established to assist the NESC and RECs carry out its mandate and spearhead the implementation of the NES.

At the national level, an Ecotourism Technical Working Group (ETWG) has been created to provide technical and administrative support to the NEDC and NESC in the implementation of EO 111. In relation to the NES, the ETWG will provide technical assistance to different projects in coordination with a pool of experts as deemed necessary.

Regional Ecotourism Technical Working Groups (RETWGs) will be created at the regional levels to assist the RECs carry out its task to implement the NES. The RETWGs will be an equivalent technical and administrative support mechanism for the RECs. Interaction between the ETWG and RETWGs will be fostered.

Figure 4 -1 illustrates the institutional relationships in the implementation of the NES.

5 National Ecotourism Program

A National Ecotourism Program (NEP) is developed to provide an integrated and coordinated mechanism for ecotourism in the Philippines. The NEP is composed of the following:

- Key Ecotourism Sites
- Product Development
- Marketing and Promotions
- Education and Advocacy
- Support Programs
- National Ecotourism Fund
- Monitoring and Evaluation

The DOT and DENR will spearhead the implementation of the NEP at the national and regional levels. Assistance will be sourced out from government agencies, NGOs, private sector and bilateral and multi-lateral agencies interested in conservation and ecotourism to ensure the orderly and timely implementation of the NEP.

DOT will implement the product development and promotions of the NEP. At the national level, the primary focus will be in developing standards, regulation and accreditation systems for various ecotourism products. At the regional level, the focus will be in assisting the promotion and advocacy for the key sites.

DENR will implement the resource management in the key sites to include development of visitor management services, implementation of livelihood programs, provision of extension services, conduct of training and monitoring of impacts

5.1 DOT/DENR COMPONENT

4.1.1 DOT PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The main activities of the DOT component of the National Ecotourism Program include:

- International Ecotourism Promotion.
- Domestic Ecotourism Promotion.
- Planning and Product Development.
- Training and Awareness.
- Assistance to EO 111 Bodies.

PRIORITIES FOR DOT'S ECOTOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING PROGRAM

Short-Term Priorities 2002 - 2004

- DOT, in close collaboration with DENR, RECs, LGUs and the private sector, will focus its product development on enhancing current attractions at selected Key Sites.

Special attention will be given to matching products with target market preferences, particularly Asian and domestic visitors.

- DOT will strengthen linkages between Key Sites, packaging them in partnership with the private sector, in order to influence tourism patterns, improve visitor experience and lengthen stay.
- DOT and PCVC will refine, adopt and implement the Ecotourism Marketing Plan (Appendix 4) with the aim of establishing the Philippines as an ecotourism destination in source markets.
- DOT and PCVC will integrate images of Banner Sites into promotional campaigns.
- DOT will integrate ecotourism products into domestic promotional campaigns in order to encourage Filipinos to explore and appreciate their natural attractions.
- DOT will work with DENR on the design and delivery of Ecotourism and Conservation Awareness workshops. These will focus on developing and strengthening local ecotourism products in Banner Sites and other selected Key Sites in order to more effectively involve local communities in tourism.

Medium-Term Priorities 2002—2007

- DOT, with input from the NESC and RECs, will review progress of the Ecotourism Product Development and Marketing Program and make adjustments as necessary.
- DOT will achieve improved service and safety standards through the implementation of the Standards and Accreditation program.
- DOT will provide professional skills training relevant to ecotourism and adventure operators such as local guiding, interpretation, homestay, whitewater, scuba diving, sea kayaking, event management etc in order to improve the visitor experience.

Long -Term Priorities 2002—2012

- DOT will enter into partnerships with private sector operators to attract the Western ecotourism markets and other high-yield niche segments through marketing and improved quality attractions.
- DOT will strengthen partnerships with DENR, LGUs and NGOs to consolidate the involvement of local communities in tourism to ensure the long-term sustainability of natural and cultural resources.

5.1.1 DENR'S COMPONENT OF THE NATIONAL ECOTOURISM PROGRAM

The main activities of the DENR component of the National Ecotourism Program include:

- Visitor Management.
- Livelihood Programs.
- Extension Services.
- Training.
- Impacts and Monitoring.
- Assistance to EO 111 Bodies.

PRIORITIES FOR DENR'S ECOTOURISM PROGRAM IN PROTECTED AREAS

Short-term Priorities 2002–2004

- DENR will work with DOT on the design and delivery of ecotourism and conservation awareness workshops. These will focus on developing and strengthening local ecotourism products in Banner Sites and other selected Key Sites. Participants will be selected from PAMBs, local communities, LGUs and local DENR staff. Workshops will be provided by national consultants and coordinated through the RECs and RETWGs.
- Short (one to two day) training workshops for PAWB members and Protected Area staff on visitor management techniques in protected areas. These would focus on bringing PAWBs and staff up to date with international trends in visitor management approaches and techniques.
- Completion of the “Guidelines for the Selection and Management of Recreational Zones in Protected Areas”, currently underway by PAWB, making adequate provision for ecotourism within the Guidelines.
- Development of model visitor facilities at selected Key Ecotourism Sites spread between Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. These will serve as leading examples and models for application at other Key Sites. RECs and NESC will select the sites based on the ETWG’s selection criteria for Key Ecotourism Sites. A combination of DENR and donor funding would be required. Preparation of brochures, maps and outdoor signs/information kiosks would also be included.
- DENR will design and implement a model program of working with schools in selected urban centers to raise student awareness of conservation and the benefits of recreating in protected areas.

Medium-Term Priorities 2002–2007

- DENR with DOT will continue with short, practical training modules in ecotourism product development at Key Sites in order to further develop professional skills of local guides and protected area managers. The focus will be on sites where actual products that have been or are going to be launched and will include training of local guides in interpretation, group management, safety and small business skills where appropriate. Emphasis should be on strengthening or establishing ecotourism businesses. PAMBs can play a lead role in forming partnerships between local communities and responsible entrepreneurs.
- PAWB, in association with the RECs will develop a visitor impact management system for application at Key Sites by PAMBs and DENR staff.
- Identification of those Key Sites where visitor impacts are considered by the relevant PAMB or other agency to be an issue. Trial visitor impact management techniques and monitor response of vegetation, wildlife or the local community in a systematic way.

Long-Term Priorities 2002–2012

- Preparation of Visitor Management Plans for each Key Site protected area with direction from PAMBs and input from DENR, PAWB, NGOs, LGUs and the private sector where necessary.

5.2 KEY ECOTOURISM SITES

5.2.1 THE KEY SITE CONCEPT

The key sites refer to a number of specific locations selected as the focus of concerted efforts to develop ecotourism in the Philippines. These sites were selected based on established criteria and conform to the accepted definition of ecotourism.

The EO 111 bodies will advocate the development of ecotourism in the key sites at the national, regional and local levels. The NESC/ RECs will tap the participation of various institutions, donors and other agents of development in the formulation and implementation of action plans for the key sites.

From the list of key sites, banner sites are selected to set an image and to position the Philippines in the international and domestic markets. The banner sites are envisioned to serve as models for developing ecotourism.

Emerging and potential key sites were also identified as possible areas where ecotourism can be developed in the medium- and long-term. Emerging key sites are those areas that are already in the initial stage of development while potential key sites are those not yet suitable for development and promotion.

The list of key sites will be evaluated and updated by the NESC as necessary.

5.2.2 SITE SELECTION

Led by the NESC and ETWG, a participatory process involving stakeholders at the national and regional levels was undertaken in the selection of key sites. The stakeholders were guided by a set of criteria involving a two-tiered process using specific indicators to determine the appropriateness and viability for developing ecotourism.

The first level evaluation used a scoring system based on relative weights in percentages, which assessed the sites and products according to:

- Natural and/or cultural features (35 percent).
- Availability of ecotourism product/s (35 percent).
- Level of social/ political support (30 percent).

Natural and cultural features refer to the uniqueness of a site as well as the richness and significance of its resources. Ecotourism products are resources and activities that can be developed to generate employment and livelihood for local people. Social and political support indicates the level of commitment of the community, government, private sector and NGOs to implement ecotourism development plans.

The second level evaluation involved setting priorities based on an assessment of the market demand and future benefits accruing to the host communities and visitors. Specifically, this include an assessment of the following:

- Accessibility of the site from major international and domestic gateways and tourism flows (10 percent).
- Current market demand from international and domestic visitors, including the potential appeal to these markets (30 percent).
- Availability of visitor facilities and services (25 percent).
- Local benefits accruing to the community through livelihood and employment opportunities (30 percent).
- Peace and order, security and safety (5 percent).

The relative weights for the first level evaluation were pre-assigned to ensure unilateral and uniform application. The assignment of relative weights for the second level depends on the specific circumstances in the regions.

This two-tiered process of evaluation served as basis in identifying the key and banner sites as well as the emerging and potential ecotourism areas during the National Ecotourism Planning Workshop. From a long list of sites identified in the regional ecotourism stakeholders’ consultation workshops, thirty-two (32) key sites, including 12 banner sites, were selected as shown in Figure 5-1.

In addition to the key sites, 55 emerging and potential key sites were selected as shown in Figure 5-2.

5.2.3 NETWORKING OF SITES AND PRODUCTS

To enhance visitor experience, key sites are linked to form a network of sites whose products are similar or complementary in nature, thus, giving a wider option and choice for visitors. This networking aims to allow the visitors to make travel decisions not based on location but more importantly on the available products and experiences as well as cost and time involved in moving from one site to another.

Key sites with similar products are networked into a circuit itinerary to allow visitors undertake same type of activity but with a different degree of interpretation from one site to another. Although the sites may be located apart from each other, the desire to overcome challenges motivates one to visit and/or revisit the areas. An example is trekking in Mt. Makiling, Taal and Mt.Guiting-Guiting.

Networking of key sites with complementary products is formed by creating tour packages where visitor undertake and experience varied activities within the cluster of key sites. The objective is to facilitate the movement of visitors in the cluster and encourage the development of new activities to complement or supplement existing tour programs. For example, trekking in Mt. Pinatubo can be linked with diving and snorkeling in the Hundred Islands and cultural immersion program in Vigan.

Based on the identified key sites, the following network are established to serve as input in the formulation of tour itineraries and packages by the private sector, NGOs and other interest groups:

- Manila/ Subic – Pinatubo (trekking) – Hundred Island (snorkelling, diving) – Vigan (culture)
- Manila – Cordillera (trekking, culture) – Peñablanca via Tuguegarao (caving, whitewater rafting, wildlife - bat watching) – Batanes (culture)
- Manila – Mt. Makiling (trekking) – Taal (trekking, geological) via Batangas – Mt. Guiting-Guiting (trekking)
- Manila – Mt. Makiling (trekking) – Apo Reef via Mindoro (diving)
- Manila – Mt. Makiling (trekking) – Mt. Isarog (trekking) – Mt. Mayon (trekking) – Donsol (wildlife - whale interaction) – Mt. Bulusan (trekking) – Sohoton Caves (caving, trekking) – Lake Danao (kayaking) – Olango Island (wildlife - bird watching)/ Cebu - Bohol (diving, culture, geological, snorkelling)
- Manila – Mt. Kanlaon via Dumaguete (trekking)/ Tanon Strait (wildlife - whale and dolphin watching) – Apo Island (diving, wildlife – bird watching)

Figure 5-2: Emerging and Potential Key Ecotourism Sites

Cluster	Emerging	Potential
Northern Luzon	Apayao River, Cagayan Balbalasang-Balbalan National Park and Chico River, Kalinga Biak-na-Bato, Bulacan Eva Puson Garden, Nueva Vizcaya Magat Dam, Nueva Vizcaya La Union Mt. Arayat, Pampanga Mt. Pulag, Benguet Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte Pantabangan-Karanglan Watershed, Nueva Ecija Sagada Caves, Mt. Province Subic-Bataan Rainforest	Apayao River, Cagayan Balbalasang-Balbalan National Park and Chico River, Kalinga Biak-na-Bato, Bulacan Eva Puson Garden, Nueva Vizcaya Magat Dam, Nueva Vizcaya La Union Mt. Arayat, Pampanga Mt. Pulag, Benguet Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte Pantabangan-Karanglan Watershed, Nueva Ecija Sagada Caves, Mt. Province Subic-Bataan Rainforest
Southern Luzon	Calamianes Islands, Northern Palawan Naujan Lake, Oriental Mindoro Mts. Iglit-Baco, Oriental Mindoro	Calamianes Islands, Northern Palawan Naujan Lake, Oriental Mindoro Mts. Iglit-Baco, Oriental Mindoro
Visayas	Antique, Camotes-Malapascua-Bantayan Islands, Cebu Marabut Marine Park, Leyte	Antique, Camotes-Malapascua-Bantayan Islands, Cebu Marabut Marine Park, Leyte

- Manila – Misamis Oriental via Cagayan de Oro (canopy walk, white water rafting) – Camiguin Island (trekking, geological) – Bohol (diving, culture, geological, snorkelling) – Olango Island (wildlife – bird watching)/ Cebu
- Manila – Agusan Marsh via Butuan (wildlife – bird watching) – Siargao (diving)
- Manila – Mt. Apo via Davao (trekking) – Lake Sebu (culture)
- Manila – Dipolog (culture)
- Manila/ Cebu – Puerto Princesa Underground River (caving, diving, culture, nature interpretation) – El Nido (diving, snorkelling, kayaking)
- Manila/Cebu – Puerto Princesa Underground River (caving, diving, culture, nature interpretation) – Tubbataha Reef (diving, wildlife – bird watching)

As the network of sites and products develop within a cluster, visitor stay is prolonged and demand for services will increase, thereby stimulating the creation of livelihood and job opportunities for local communities. Networking, therefore, has the resultant effect of dispersing economic benefits not only in one region but also in the other regions in a given cluster.

At the National Ecotourism Planning Workshop, key site itineraries were drawn up as shown in Figures 4-3 to 4-6. However, there is a need to elicit feedback from tour operators and travel agents to determine the feasibility and viability of these linkages.

5.3 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

5.3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS, REGULATION AND ACCREDITATION SYSTEM

Standards, regulation and accreditation systems are being developed to operationalize the concept of ecotourism which will enhance quality of visitor experience and ensure economic benefits to the communities. The proliferation of products marketed as ecotourism calls for governments and the tourism industry to set an accreditation program. In the Philippines, EO 111 outlines the need for regulation and accreditation systems to ensure that products adhere to minimum standards and principles of ecotourism.

STANDARDS

Ecotourism standards refer to the minimum requirements for developing the natural and cultural resources as well as building facilities, providing services and implementing activities in the key sites.

Carrying capacity is one form of standard that must be established in the key sites before any facilities are set up and increase number of visitors is allowed. In protected areas, the protected area management plan provides the guidelines for ecotourism development based on Republic Act No. 7586. This law ensures that developments would be in keeping with the carrying capacities of the protected areas. Environmental standards are also enforced to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism activities in those areas. Outside of the protected areas, ecotourism activities are likewise governed by environmental standards enforced by the EMB to safeguard the areas' "carrying capacities."

At the facilities and services level, standards relating to the design, construction and materials for lodging and ancillary facilities need to be developed. Standards for tour guides and activities in the key sites are likewise necessary to promote professionalism and ensure high quality of visitor experience.

Setting of standards will require consultation and partnership with concerned stakeholders. In this regard, the collaboration of the DOT and DENR will strengthen efforts to ensure adherence to tourism standards, monitoring impacts and enforcing compliance with carrying capacity. Standards will also involve the adoption of best practices for developing facilities, services and activities.

REGULATION

The need to control and regulate ecotourism development is critical to its long-term sustainability. Existing laws mandate that any development in environmentally critical areas (ECAs) require environmental compliance certificate (ECC).

At the national level, the NESC will endorse major ecotourism projects to the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) for issuance of programmatic ECC. This will ensure that environmental, social and cultural impacts are adequately addressed prior to the implementation of the project. The RECs will endorse minor ecotourism projects to the Regional EMBs for issuance of ECCs.

The following consideration will guide the NESC and RECs in evaluating ecotourism projects:

- The project is located within a natural and cultural heritage area;
- The project will generate local employment and livelihood as well as promote active participation of local community;
- The project will provide for management of risks related to health, safety and security;
- The project will promote environmental education and protection through appropriate plans, standards, policies and practices;
- The project will promote cultural preservation and respect for indigenous knowledge and practices;
- The project will provide for visitor satisfaction; and
- The project is technically and financially viable.

Projects or undertakings endorsed by the NESC/ RECs will form part of the ecotourism network, thus, eligible for support.

ACCREDITATION

A system of accreditation will be established for ecotourism products to maintain and improve the quality of visitor experience, market and promote ecotourism, and determine projects eligible for support.

In the short-term, accreditation will encourage existing products to adopt the standards for ecotourism. In the long-term, accreditation will ensure that standards are maintained, thus, assuring the industry and consumers of high quality and globally competitive products.

An accreditation system for ecotourism guides and specific activities such as rafting, kayaking, whale-watching and village host programs will be prepared in consultation with experts and concerned stakeholders.

The responsibility of maintaining standards will rests with ecotourism operators. The NESC/RECs will assist operators in meeting the standards for accreditation.

5.3.2 ADOPTION OF INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ECOTOURISM ICONS/ SYMBOLS

The use of internationally recognized ecotourism symbols is vital for destination marketing and site development. These icons/symbols will provide a common language among visitors, agencies, private sector and host communities in promoting ecotourism.

5.3.3 DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ECOTOURISM ETHICS

The need to protect natural areas and preserve cultural sites will require the development of ethics on the do's and don'ts to be observed in ecotourism sites. These rules will remind the visitors and operators on their proper conduct, behavior and activities in ecotourism sites.

5.3.4 CLASSIFICATION OF PRODUCTS/ GRADING OF ACTIVITIES

Ecotourism products will be classified according to type while activities will be graded based on degree of difficulty. This will help inform the markets of the type of products being purchased and guide operators in adhering to prescribed standards for specific products and activities.

5.3.5 DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL GUIDELINES AND MODULES FOR ECOTOURISM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

To provide a uniform system for ecotourism planning and development, the following guidelines and modules are necessary:

- Site Inventory and Data Banking
A system for building an inventory and data bank of ecotourism sites and products is needed as benchmark for planning and development. The system will guide planners, managers and decision-makers on the ecotourism sites and products, which can be developed and promoted.
- Ecotourism Site Planning
Planning procedures for ecotourism will have to include spatial planning, zoning, assessment of carrying capacity, and visitor management. Various techniques may be used such as physical/social carrying capacity, limits of acceptable change (LAC), visitor impact management (VIM), recreation-opportunity spectrum (ROS) and integrated master planning.
Appropriate ecotourism activities will be developed based on assessment of the natural and cultural features of the site.
- Promotions Planning
Promotions plan will have to be prepared to help forecast demand and define not only market sources but also the means to attract visitors.

5.4 MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

5.4.1 OBJECTIVES

Using the banner sites as images, the Philippines will be established as an international ecotourism destination. The banner sites will not only create awareness

among ecotourists of the diverse products that the country can offer but also develop pride of place among the Filipinos.

Marketing ecotourism will also increase investment and invite support, thus, bring direct and indirect benefits to the LGUs and local communities.

5.4.2 TARGET MARKETS

Ecotourism products will be promoted to existing and potential markets, to wit:

- Primary target
- Short haul: Japan, China, Korea, and Taiwan
- Long haul: North America and Australia/ New Zealand
- Regional expatriates
- Balikbayan
- Domestic segments
- Secondary target
- Short haul: Other Asian segments (Malaysia, Singapore)
- Long haul: Europe (United Kingdom, Germany, France, Scandinavian countries and BENELUX)

5.4.3 DESTINATION AWARENESS

MARKET IMAGE

Developing market image capitalizing on the banner sites will brand and position the Philippines as a strong and distinct ecotourism destination. This image will be supplemented with tour programs or itineraries highlighting the unique selling points to include: coral reefs and wreck diving; wildlife watching such as whale sharks/ dolphins, tarsier, Philippine eagle and bat flights; river running, kayaking, volcanoes and mountain trekking. The hospitality, warmth and culture of the Filipinos will enrich the quality of ecotourism experience.

The current Wealth of Wonders (WOW) campaign can be expanded to include taglines such as "Walk on the Wildside", "Wealth of Whales", Watch Our Wildlife".

MARKETING POSITIONING

Branding the Philippines as ecotourism destination will target specific market preferences:

- Short haul (Japan, China, Taiwan, and other Asian). The focus for this market will be to add-on to existing tourism activities such as:
- Volcano summit climbs (Mts. Kan-laon, Mayon, Pinatubo, Taal)
- Scuba diving (Tubbataha and Apo Reefs, Palawan, Hundred Islands)
- Soft coastal adventure such as snorkelling, sea kayaking, canopy walk, marine mammal viewing (Olango, Tanon Strait)
- Organized soft adventure packages such as river running, canoeing, caving (Penablanca)
- Managed cultural village visits and walks (Cordillera Rice Terraces, Vigan)
- Surfing (Siargao)
- Long haul (North America, Australia/ New Zealand and Europe). The theme for this

market will be to enrich special interests activities:

- Scuba diving (Tubbataha and Apo Reefs, Palawan)
- Marine mammal encounters (Tanon Strait, Bohol, Donsol)
- Trekking (Cordillera Rice Terraces)
- Cultural village visits (Pinatubo, Cordillera, Batanes, Lake Sebu)
- Birdwatching, surfing and religious visits
- Domestic segments and balikbayans. The focus for this market will be to add-on to their vacations and holidays:
- Fiestas, festivals and pilgrimages (Camiguin, Penablanca)
- Rafting and kayaking (Cagayan River, Cagayan de Oro)
- Adventure such as volcano trekking, mountain climbing, mountain biking, wildlife viewing
- Outdoor education
- Special events such as adventure races

MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Promoting Philippine ecotourism in the international market will involve tie-ups with international wholesalers and tour operators selling ecotourism products, attending to trade fairs and travel shows focusing on ecotourism, and conducting sales missions and road shows. Joint marketing initiatives with airlines will help market the Philippines.

Familiarization trips for media, travel agents, airline representatives and tour operators to the key sites will also create awareness on the products available. Advertising ecotourism in special interest brochures will be vital in disseminating information to the target markets. Organizing special events such as surfing competition and adventure races will help to reinforce the image.

5.5 EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

5.5.1 NATIONAL AND LOCAL EFFORT FOR ECOTOURISM EDUCATION

Educating stakeholders through ecotourism will foster greater appreciation and partnership towards the sustainable use, conservation and protection of the environment. Compiling and disseminating information and best practices will enhance awareness and interest on ecotourism.

At the national level, the NESC will advocate the integration of ecotourism at the education levels to instill environmental consciousness among the youth. Participation of the private sector will boost the national campaign on ecotourism through the development of tour programs that demonstrate best practices in ecotourism operation and management. Cooperation of the media will promote a positive image of the country as an ecotourism destination. Support from international agencies will assist in developing the key sites as models for ecotourism.

At the local level, the RECs will tap the LGUs, NGO, host communities, women, indigenous peoples and other interest groups to serve as agents for disseminating information through outreach programs, workshops, seminars and consultations.

5.5.2 INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

Production and dissemination of information, education and communication (IEC) materials will facilitate understanding of ecotourism principles among various stakeholders. IEC can be produced in a number of forms including pamphlets, brochures, books and other graphic material, interpretive/ visitor centers or eco-museums, signages, and other interpretation programmes. Its development will be based from the best practices achieved by ecotourism projects as well as experiences of project implementers and experts in the field. Translation of IEC materials in various dialects will also help make more people learn and understand ecotourism. Multi-media will be used in developing IEC materials.

Development of manuals will guide local entrepreneurs, planners, decision makers and community in planning, managing and monitoring their ecotourism sites. The manual may include processes, techniques, best practices and step-by-step procedure in designing and implementing ecotourism products. The needs of stakeholders will be integrated in the development of manuals to address current specific and future needs.

Videos and documentary films of success stories will likewise be produced to complement print and visual materials. These will motivate greater interest among a wide range of stakeholders at the national and local levels.

5.5.3 MODEL ECOTOURISM PROJECTS

Developing model or pilot ecotourism projects will help inform, educate and advocate ecotourism. This will provide the basis for mobilizing greater support and partnership at the national and local levels as well as among the donor community.

The model projects will showcase best practices, partnership of stakeholders and lessons learned in protecting the environment and managing the resources for ecotourism. These will encourage other proponents, LGUs, NGOs, indigenous peoples and the private sector to adopt and replicate the success efforts in developing appropriate ecotourism product in their locality. Academe will also be used the models projects to instil conservation values in school curricula.

5.5.4 PHILIPPINE ECOTOURISM COMMUNICATION NETWORK

The establishment of communication network will link ecotourism stakeholders in the Philippines. The network will be based on an expanding mailing list of concerned individuals, operators, developers, NGOs, LGUs, donor institutions and government agencies with interests on ecotourism. A newsletter will be published and distributed among stakeholders. The communication network will be expanded through e-mail and development of website.

The network is envisaged as a valuable means to encourage grass-roots participation in developing ecotourism throughout the Philippines. It will also serve as conduit for disseminating technical information and advice on product development and promotion.

The Philippine ecotourism communication network is open to all interested parties to share data and experiences on ecotourism. Two categories of membership is envisioned:

- Category 1. Organizations working in the Philippines in projects or activities relevant to ecotourism.

The target participants may include tourism companies, government agencies with mandates relevant to ecotourism, academe, NGOs and INGOs with ecotourism programs and projects, consulting firms working on ecotourism, and tourism associations.

- Category 2. Individuals and organizations not working directly in ecotourism in Philippines.

The target participants may include interested individuals, media and organizations working on ecotourism outside of the Philippines, international universities with ecotourism program, students and researchers, international tourism and conservation organizations.

The significance of these categories will be greater in the future when networking mechanisms such as websites is established with links to other services offered by Category 1 members.

Vital to the implementation of the communication network is the strengthening of the National Ecotourism Program Office (NEPO), which will be the home base of the NESC and ETWG. Strengthening the NEPO is envisaged in the following manner:

- Secondment/ detail of full time staff from DOT, DENR and other agencies;
- Contracting national consultants to undertake short term assignments with NEPO staff and ETWG members to deliver technical assistance to the key sites;
- Sending NEPO staff and ETWG members on study missions and exchange programs on ecotourism; and
- Tap national and international NGOs to provide experienced personnel to work with the NEPO on specific tasks such as establishing the communication network.

The NEPO can become a model organization, unique in the Philippines, supported by partners and donors to implement EO 111. Its objectives and membership can be similar to successful models for ecotourism in other countries, such as Nepal (Sustainable Tourism Network), Australia (Australian Ecotourism Association), and New Zealand (Adventure Tourism Council).

The NEPO can be a channel for delivering technical assistance to ecotourism projects through a cadre of multi-disciplinary and experienced national consultants to work under the guidance of the NESC in delivering technical assistance whenever required. This type of technical assistance will stimulate development of new ecotourism business to boost the growth of the Philippine ecotourism industry.

Donor agencies have proven interests to work with such organizations especially where there is a clear focus on producing results benefiting the grass roots.

5.6 SUPPORT PROGRAMS

5.6.1 CAPABILITY BUILDING

Implement capacity building program on ecotourism at the community, service and local government levels will promote professionalism and ensure adherence to standards.

Training on ecotourism project management, product development and interpretation will empower the LGUs and host communities to develop appropriate programs in their localities. However, an assessment of skills and talents of the community must be undertaken to determine the requisite training program needed for local employment and livelihood.

Increasing the capacity of the NESC/ RECs as well as the ETWGs will be critical to enable them to perform their mandated tasks and provide technical assistance to the key sites.

Executives and managers of companies as well as their employees will need to be trained on general and specific aspects of ecotourism, tailored to their needs. In particular, ecotourism needs highly qualified local guides with training on the appropriate interpretation of the natural and cultural significance of their area.

1.4.2 COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

The RECs will lead in organizing community to prepare for ecotourism venture. The NGOs and other interest groups will be tapped to assist the RECs in implementing community organizing program. Visioning and participatory planning activities will be undertaken to elicit inputs on the proposed ecotourism program in the key sites.

1.4.3 SUPPORT SERVICES

Programs pertaining to security, health/ rescue services, waste management and disaster/ emergency management will have to be strengthened to make the key sites more attractive and competitive in the market.

5.7 ECOTOURISM FUND

1.5.1 CONCEPT

A National Ecotourism Fund will be established to support the key sites and foster partnership in developing ecotourism models. The fund will “kick-start” ecotourism development, promotes joint training and marketing, and facilitates technical assistance.

1.5.2 NATURE

The fund will be based on a 50/50 matched scheme. The NESC will establish the criteria and procedure for accessing the fund. Projects accredited and endorsed by the NESC/ RECs will be eligible for support from the fund.

1.5.3 SOURCES

International/ mutli/ bilateral donors and local agencies will be tapped to support the fund. Moreover, user fees and charges will be considered as potential sources of the fund.

5.8 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A system for monitoring and evaluation will be designed and institutionalised at the national, regional and site levels.

At the national level, the NESC will monitor the implementation of the NEP by coordinating with the concerned agencies and institutions to determine status of the various programs and identify gaps in the implementation of the Strategy.

The RECs will monitor project implementation and submit status reports to the NESC. Protected Area Superintendents (PASUs) and ecotourism operators will conduct monitoring and evaluation at the site level and submit status reports to the RECs.

Figure 5-7 Summary of the National Ecotourism Program		
Program Component	Responsible Agencies/ Entities	Desired Outcomes
1. Key Ecotourism Sites 1.1 Site Selection 1.2 Network of Sites and Products	NESC, RECs, ETWG, Industry/ Tourism Association, NGAs, LGUs, Academe, etc.	Focussed development efforts in key ecotourism sites Established network of sites and product Enhanced coordination between and among stakeholders
2. Product Development 2.1 Development of standards, regulations and accreditation systems 2.2 Adoption of internationally recognized ecotourism icons/ symbols 2.3 Development and institutionalization of ecotourism ethics 2.4 Classification of products/ grading of activities 2.5 Development of institutional guidelines and modules for ecotourism planning and development	NESC, RECs, ETWG, Industry/ Tourism Association, NGAs, LGUs, Academe, etc.	Established system for standards and accreditation Adopted ecotourism icons/ symbols Ecotourism ethics developed and institutionalized Ecotourism product classified and graded Databanking system output Ecotourism site planning techniques Banner sites promoted as international ecotourism destinations Target markets identified Market imaged developed Tie-ups with international markets
3. Marketing and Promotions 3.1 Destination awareness 3.2 Market positioning 3.3 Marketing activities	NESC, RECs, ETWG, Industry/ Tourism Association, NGAs, LGUs, Academe, etc.	Ecotourism integrated in to school curriculum at all levels Enhanced awareness thru outreach program, workshops and seminars IEC materials produced and disseminated Pilot ecotourism projects established and replicated Communication network established

Program Component	Responsible Agencies/ Entities	Desired Outcomes
4. Education and Advocacy 4.1 National and local effort for ecotourism education 4.2 Information, education and communication materials 4.3 Model ecotourism projects 4.4 Philippine Ecotourism Communication Network	NESC, RECs, ETWG, Industry/ Tourism Association, NGAs, LGUs, Academe, etc.	Capacity program implemented Empowered local community Programs for security, health, rescue services, waste management, disaster/ emergency strenghten National ecotourism fund established 50/50 scheme Criteria and procedure for accessing the fund develop International, bi-lateral, multilateral, local donors tapped
5. Support Programs 5.1 Capability building 5.2 Community organizing 5.3 Support services	NESC, RECs, ETWG, Industry/ Tourism Association, NGAs, LGUs, Academe, etc.	Monitoring and evaluation institutionalized
6. Ecotourism Fund	NESC, RECs, ETWG, Industry/ Tourism Association, NGAs, LGUs, Academe, etc.	
7. Monitoring and Evaluation	NESC, RECs, ETWG, LGUs	

Figure 5-1: Key Ecotourism Sites (map)



Figure 5-3: Key Site Linkages in Northern Luzon





1



3



2

Welcome to a fabled land of stunning landscapes. The **Batanes Islands [1]**—a rugged, rocky home to the friendly Ivatan people. Lying some 180 kilometers north of the Luzon mainland, well of urban life, Batanes' isolation is perhaps its most endearing quality.

Visitors will be treated to a wealth of cultural, historical and natural attractions. Batanes has its share of old Spanish churches, village dotted with traditional stone houses and an abundance of beautiful scenery.

Vigan [2]—a sleepy colonial-era town located on the west coast of Luzon, it is a

place where past meets the present. Once called "a piece of Spain in the orient" this locale evokes a feeling of life in 18th-century Philippines with cobble streets, antiques and clip-clopping calesas.

Vigan's most popular attractions are of course, its centuries old houses, cobble stones and "baroque" churches, which have all but remain unchanged from their turn of the century heydays. Vigan you see is eight hours, 400 kilometers and a century away from Manila.

Located at the northeastern tip of Luzon, the **Peñablanca Protected Landscape [3]** is

known for its countless caves and lush, fertile land. It is verdant junction to some of the region's greatest landscape—the Cordillera and Sierra Madre Mountains lie on its western and eastern borders, providing the perfect setting for some truly intense eco-adventures.

Try your hand at spelunking in some of the best-preserved caves this side of the province. Get your feet wet, literally, in white water kayaking expedition. Should you wish to keep your feet dry, there is also a host of less-hectic activities for the eco-tourist.



4

A vast, 23,000 sq. km. chunk of mountainous terrain in Northern Luzon, the **Gran Central Cordillera** [4] Mountains capture the imagination with cool foggy weather and majestic rice terraces. Bounded by the lowland provinces on all sides, it is essentially a landlocked region, its lush valleys, and pine-covered peaks making it one of the Philippines' most popular destinations.

Despite this seemingly forbidding landscape, the Cordilleras are actually home to numerous ethnic communities. There are around eleven of such groups in the

highlands, all of them possessing their own unique cultures, customs and traditions.

First there is the terrain: a vast expanse of land reaching out to the horizon, strewn with hills, mountains, streams, rocks, pebbles and boulders the size of cars. Then there's the omnipresent sand, which gets into everything and everywhere else. Finally, there's the journey itself: sixty minutes of bumping, grinding 4x4 action, followed by three hours of trekking. Raw, rugged yet beautiful, **Mt. Pinatubo** [6] is no easy climb—it makes you pay on the way up.

Rising some 1,780 meters above the plains, it made the headlines when it erupted in 1991. Devastating central Luzon, it dumped tons of ashes and made raging rivers of lahar. These days however Mt. Pinatubo is the focus of attraction for eco-tourists.

No need to count them to realize the boatload of fun they offer. **The Hundred Islands National Park** [5] is Pangasinan's provincial pride, consisting of a small archipelago off the coast of Alaminos. Call it a tiny version of the Philippines, its 200 plus green topped, white ringed islets set amidst a brilliant backdrop of deep blue.



5



6

Figure 5-4: Key Site Linkages in Southern Luzon



Conservation Research Mapping and Systems Development
WWF Philippines (Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas)
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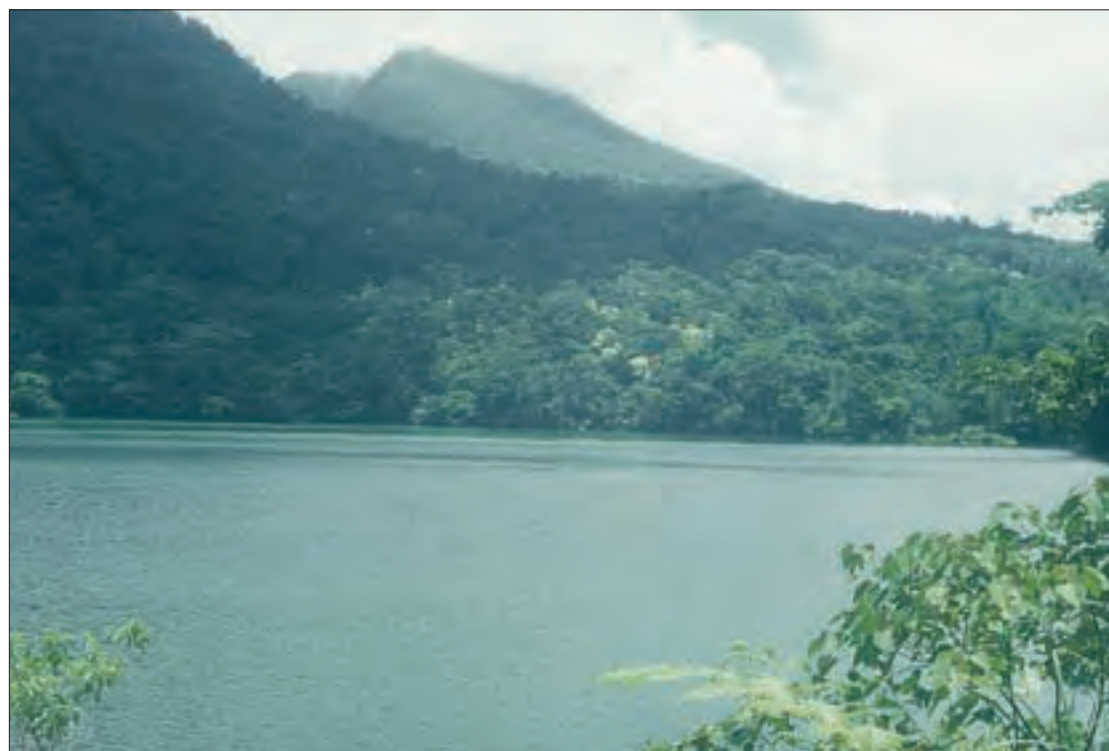
Climb the world's smallest volcano or simply view it from the cool foggy slopes of nearby **Tagaytay City**. Aside from being fairly challenging and rugged climb, **Taal Volcano [9]** is a major lesson in earth science. Situated among red oxidized soil and smoking vapor vents in the main crater, which houses a small lake of sulfur and water. Up here the wind is cool, atmosphere calm and the view breathtaking. Such a lovely sight, one might say, that belies this land's awesome but violent nature.

For decades, the seafaring natives of **Donsol [12]**, Sorsogon have been living in the company of the butanding—huge, gentle whale sharks that live in great numbers offshore. In a still unexplained natural phenomenon, droves of these animals congregate in the waters of this town during summer months, forming the main attractions in a bustling eco-tourism industry.

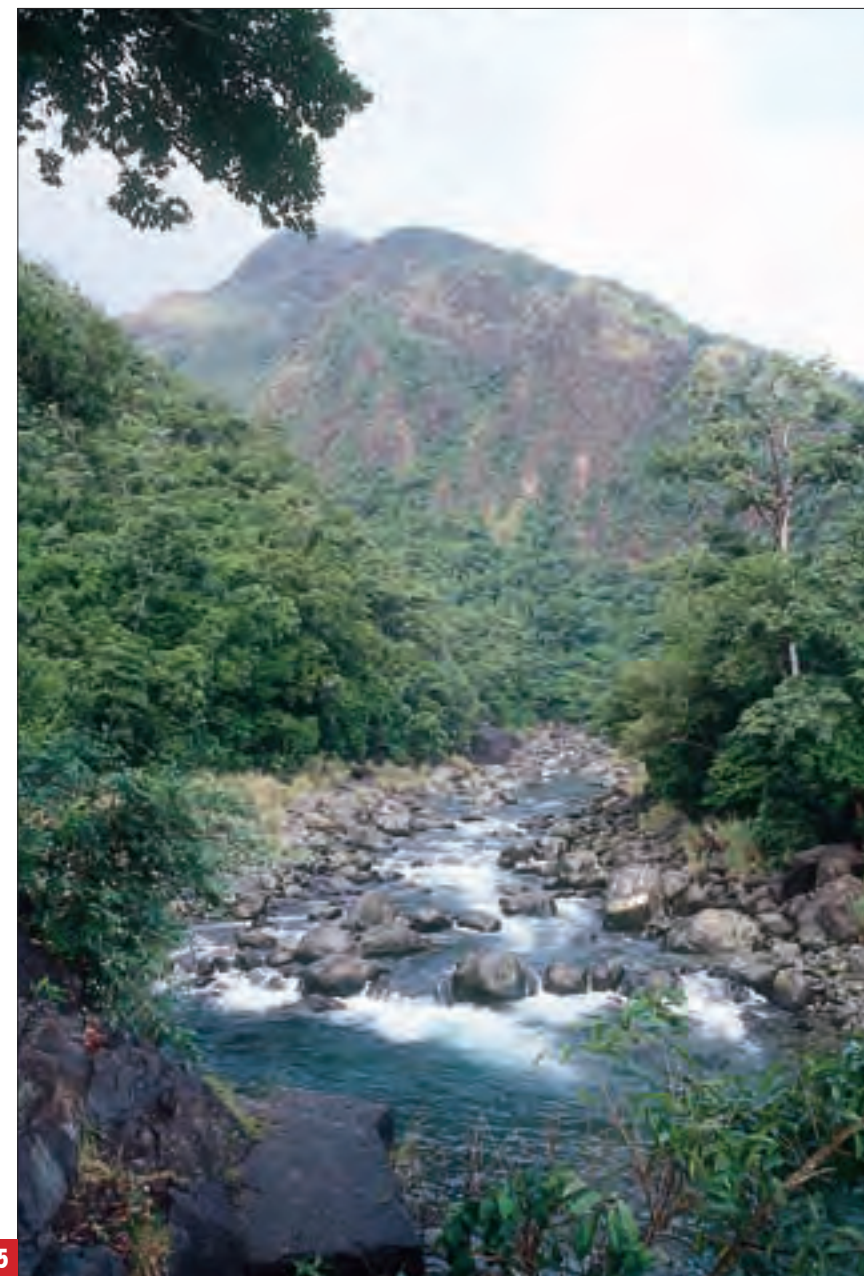




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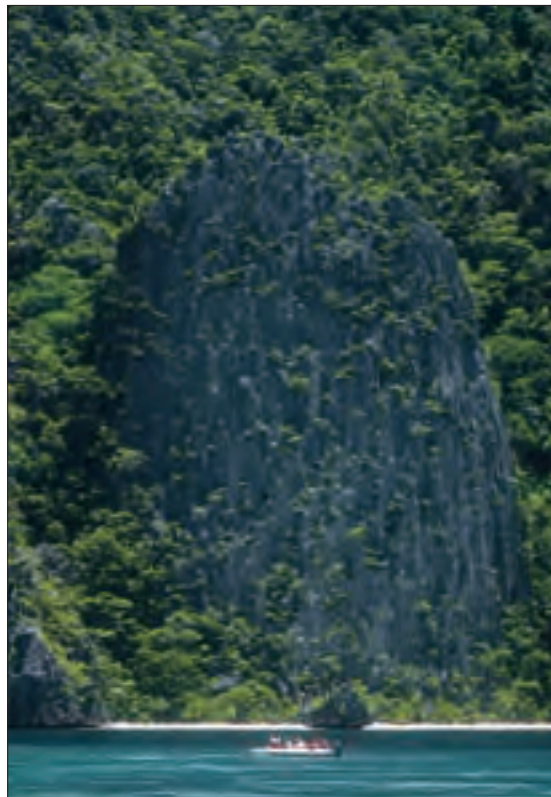
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15

For both tyro trekker and hardened hiker, Southern Luzon has a wealth of landscapes waiting to be explored. It offers five of the best climbs this side of the islands, each with its own unique set of challenges and difficulties.

*Straddling the border between Batangas and Laguna, deep in Southern Tagalog country, **Mt. Makiling** beckons with its numerous hot springs and hiking trails. There are also plenty of resorts nearby, sharing the cool mountain air and the lush greenery with a number of educational institutions. Further south is the majestic **Mt. Mayon** [11], an active volcano boasting an almost perfect cone and **Mt. Isarog** [10] and **Mt. Bulusan** [13]—all of them replete with the rich flora and fauna of the Bicol region. **Mt. Guiting-Guiting** [15] found on the island of Sibuyan possesses many species of flora and fauna found nowhere else in the country.*



16

Named after the nests made by rare birds which is the main ingredient for a tasty delicacy, **El Nido [16]** archipelago in Palawan evoke images of an untainted paradise. Steep limestone cliffs and lush vegetation are a common sight along its numerous islands, complemented by picturesque hidden lagoon and serene forests.

Palawan's famous river is undoubtedly one of the province's most visited sites. Glide through the awesome caverns of **St. Paul's Underground River [17]**, taking in the cool air and the calm, quiet darkness below. It is a breathtaking trip to the bowels of the earth, one that could well whet your appetite for more subterranean sojourns. Should you wish to do some more you can also check out the rest of the St. Paul National park—there are quiet treks, scenic boat rides and many more caves.

A small, solitary islet lying between the provinces of Oriental Mindoro and Palawan, **Apo Reef [14]** has an uncanny characteristic that belies its diminutive size. White sand beaches, saltwater lakes and superb blue water diving are only a few of its many attractions.

Located right in the middle of the Sulu Sea, the **Tubbataha Reef [18]** is one of the most beautiful dive spots in the Philippines. It is home to a dazzling array of marine wildlife, making it a favorite among diving enthusiasts from all over the world.



17



14



18

Figure 5-5: Key Site Linkages in Visayas



Conservation Research Mapping and Systems Development
WWF Philippines (Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas)
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23

Bohol may be a small island but it ranks high on the ecotourism scale. Be it deep jungle, lush lowland or high seas, there is something in here for every ecotourist's mood and preference. Nature lovers would do well to visit the famous **Chocolate Hills** [23], head on to Loboc River Safari, among many other destinations. For the offshore enthusiasts, there's a virtual treasure trove of dive sites to visit and explore.



25



temporary/for sourcing

24



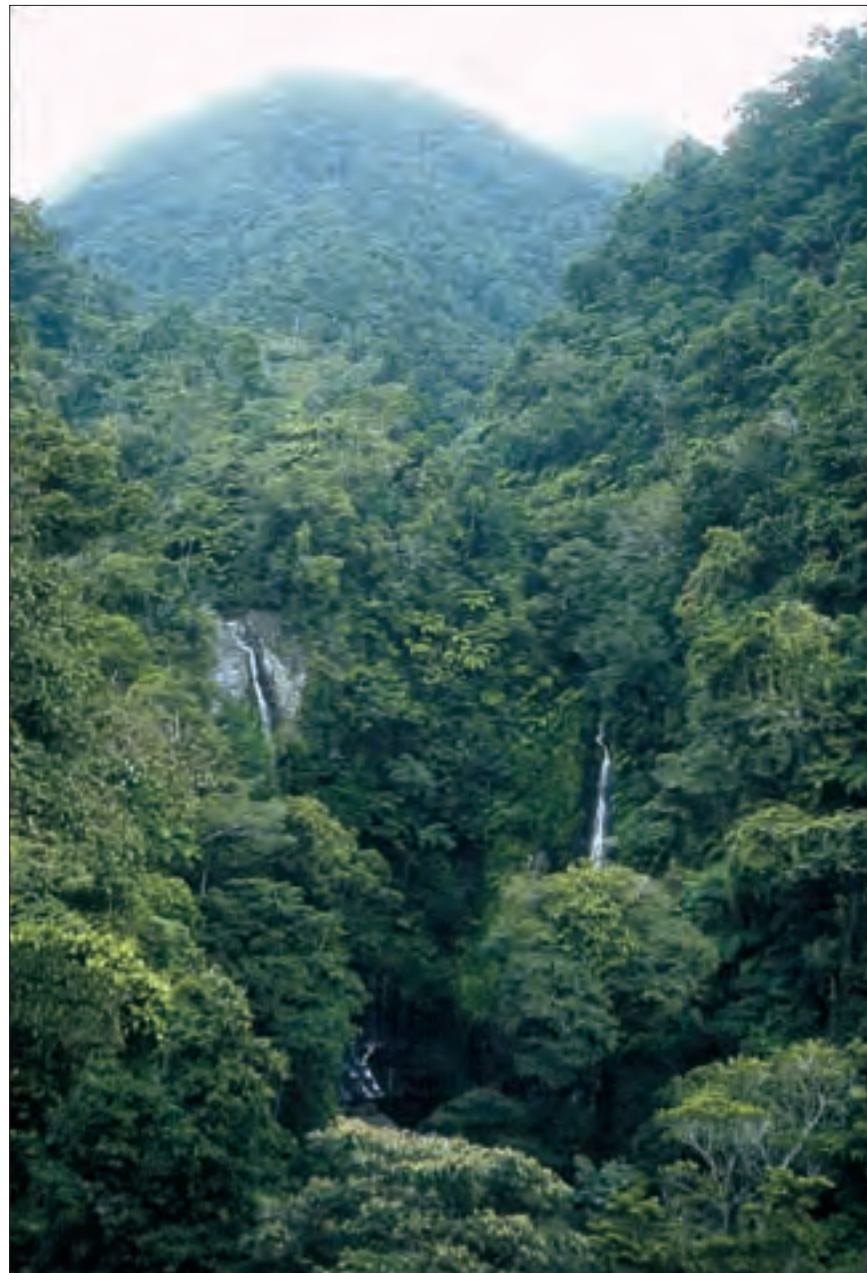
19

A small marine wildlife sanctuary off the coast of Negros Oriental, **Apo Island** [25] beckons with its pristine shoreline and sparkling blue waters. Make your way here on a native outrigger boat. Bring out the flippers, snorkel and scuba gear, and prepare for an exciting round of seaside adventures.

The waters of **Tañon Strait** [24] are host to a unique ecotourism attraction: pods of dolphins eagerly awaiting visitors from land! The starting point for most dolphin watching tours is the town of Bais, Negros Oriental where sightseeing boats can be

easily rented. Spend a day with these fun-loving creatures of the sea—we guarantee an interactive experience you won't forget.

The **Sohoton Caves National Park** [19], an 840-hectare nature reserve, beckons with an endless array of subterranean delights. Make your way through the pristine rock tunnels filled with exquisite formations. There are underground streams, natural bridges and huge sky lit caverns, all spread out over dozens of underground chambers.



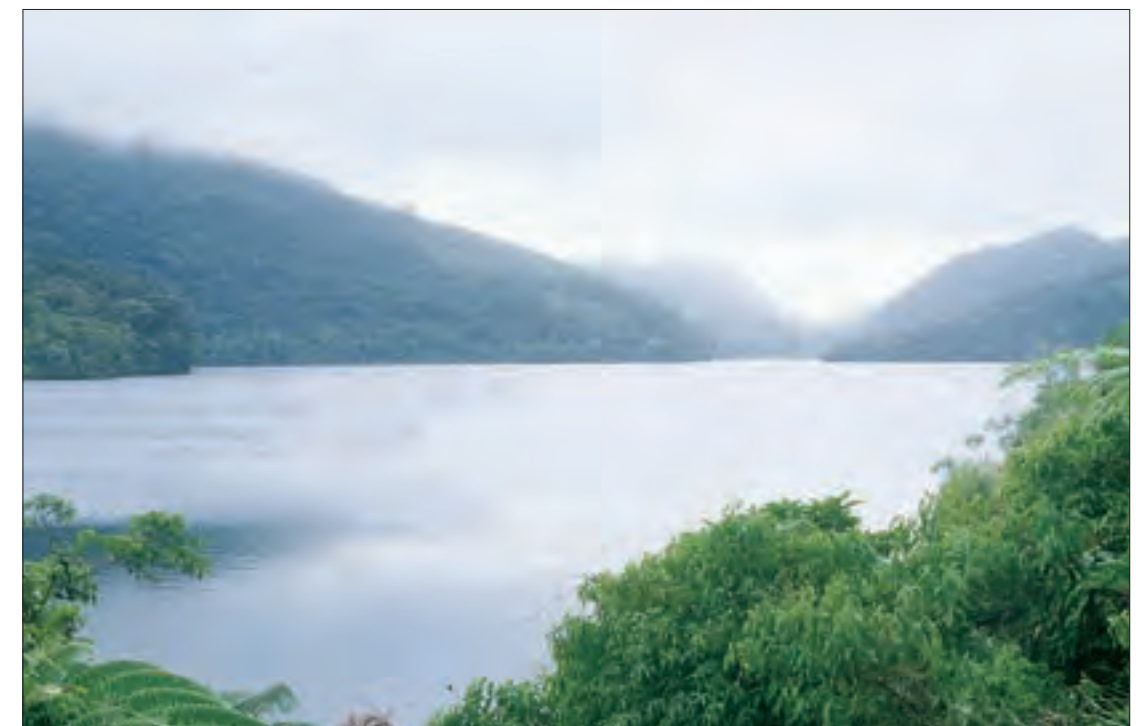
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Keeping watch over much of Negros Island is **Mt. Kanlaon [21]**, a towering 2,465 meter high volcano. Within its slopes lie an abundance of natural attractions. Greenery covers much of its surface, along with dwarf forests, pine trees, several lakes and a huge main crater that makes this particular climb unique. typical treks take up to 3-4 days, giving ecotourists enough time to see such sights as the Buslogan and Oro Waterfalls, the Samok lagoon and the Margaha Valley.

Way before the scientists and the ecotourists arrived here, the flat, muddy plains of **Olango Island [22]** were already host to a set of visitors. Every year from February-April, thousands of migratory birds plying the East Asian migratory flyway arrive to make a stopover at the wildlife reserve. Essentially a huge 920-hectare protected wetland, the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary serves as a resting place for a variety of migrating water birds. Tucked away in a quiet corner of Leyte is a mountain refuge unlike any other. Lying some 2,600 feet above sea level, **Lake Danao [20]** is a favorite picnic spot for Leyteños. This national park brims with simple yet enjoyable diversions like hiking, horseback riding and river rafting. Check out the nearby Daguitan Rapids, then visit the equally scenic Lake Mahagnao, or perhaps trek the entire 40-km. length of the Leyte Mountain Trail.



23



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Figure 5-6: Key Site Linkages in Mindanao



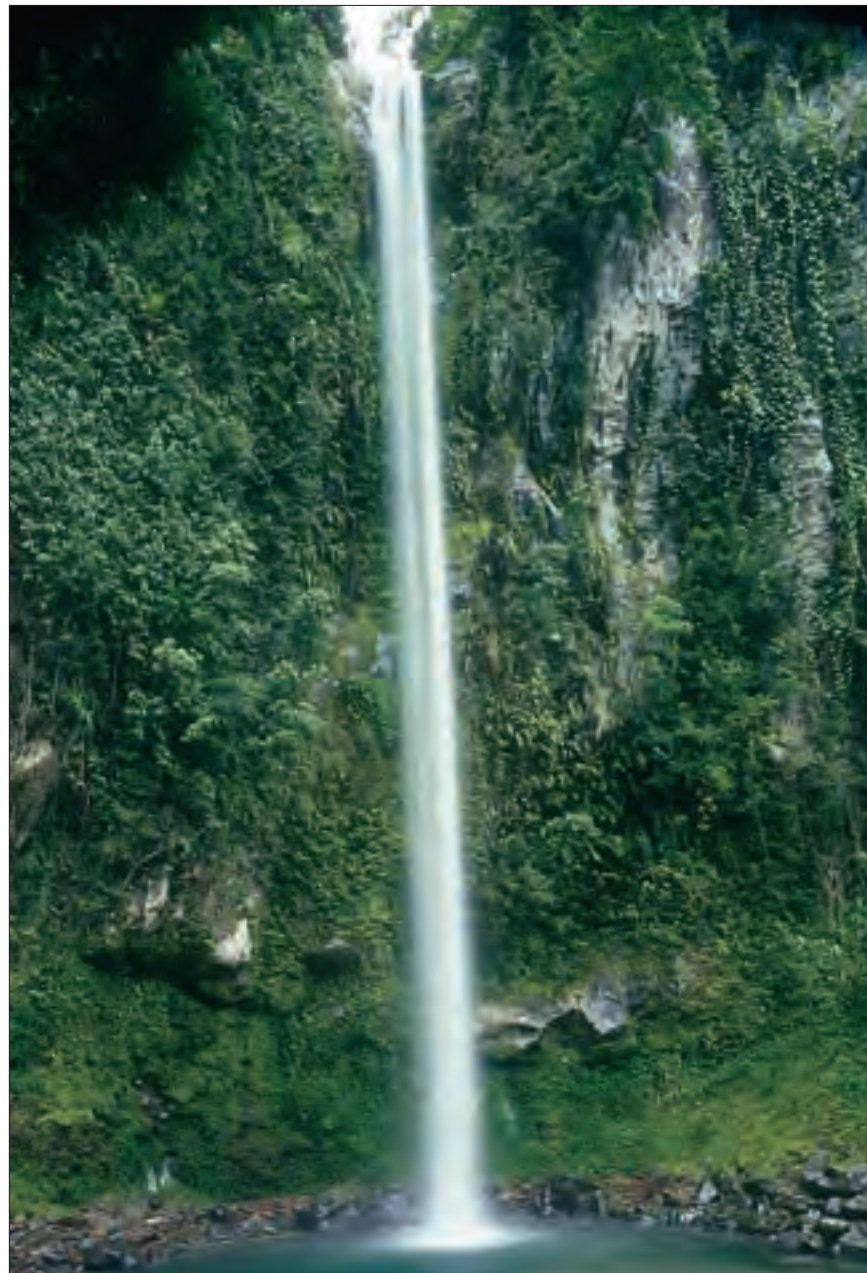
26

There is more to this city than just its tasty sardines. Situated in the northern coast of Zamboanga del Norte, **Dipolog [30]** is a bonafide gateway to the unspoiled, untainted side of Mindanao. In Dipolog one can enjoy the sandy beaches and crystal clear waters of Dapitan Bay and Aliquay Island, then head off for a refreshing hike up the nearby mountains.

Time for a hearty helping of sun, sand and surfing action. Since the early nineties, **Siargao Island [26]** off the coast of Siargao del Norte has been a magnet for surfers worldwide. This island's southeastern coast has just the right geographic ingredients to produce the perfect wave, making it host to a vibrant international surfing community.



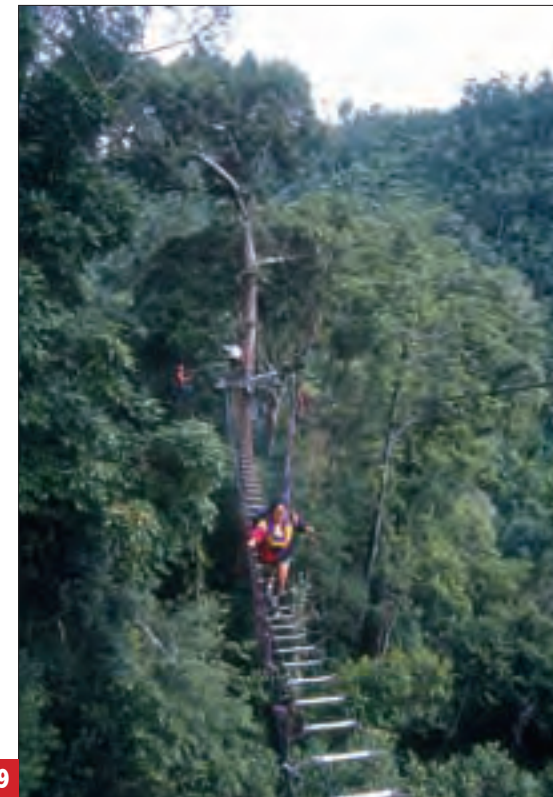
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27

A center of trade and commerce in the Northern Mindanao region, **Misamis Oriental** [29] possesses wealth of natural attractions ranging from highlands to high seas. There is a lot of everything in this province for ecotourists. For starters check out its world-class dive sites and beaches. There is also the Malasag Ecotourism Gardens, a breathtaking canopy walk, as well as countless other scenic hikes, caves and waterfalls.

It is a small, sun-kissed island blessed with idyllic landscapes, a cozy lifestyle and gentle people. **Camiguin** [27], off the coast of Misamis Oriental, has proven itself worthy of a place among the Philippines' top anchor destinations. Check out its white-sand beaches, scenic waterfalls and therapeutic springs. The province is also home to a hiker's haven of seven volcanoes—more than enough reason to visit this charming province.



29



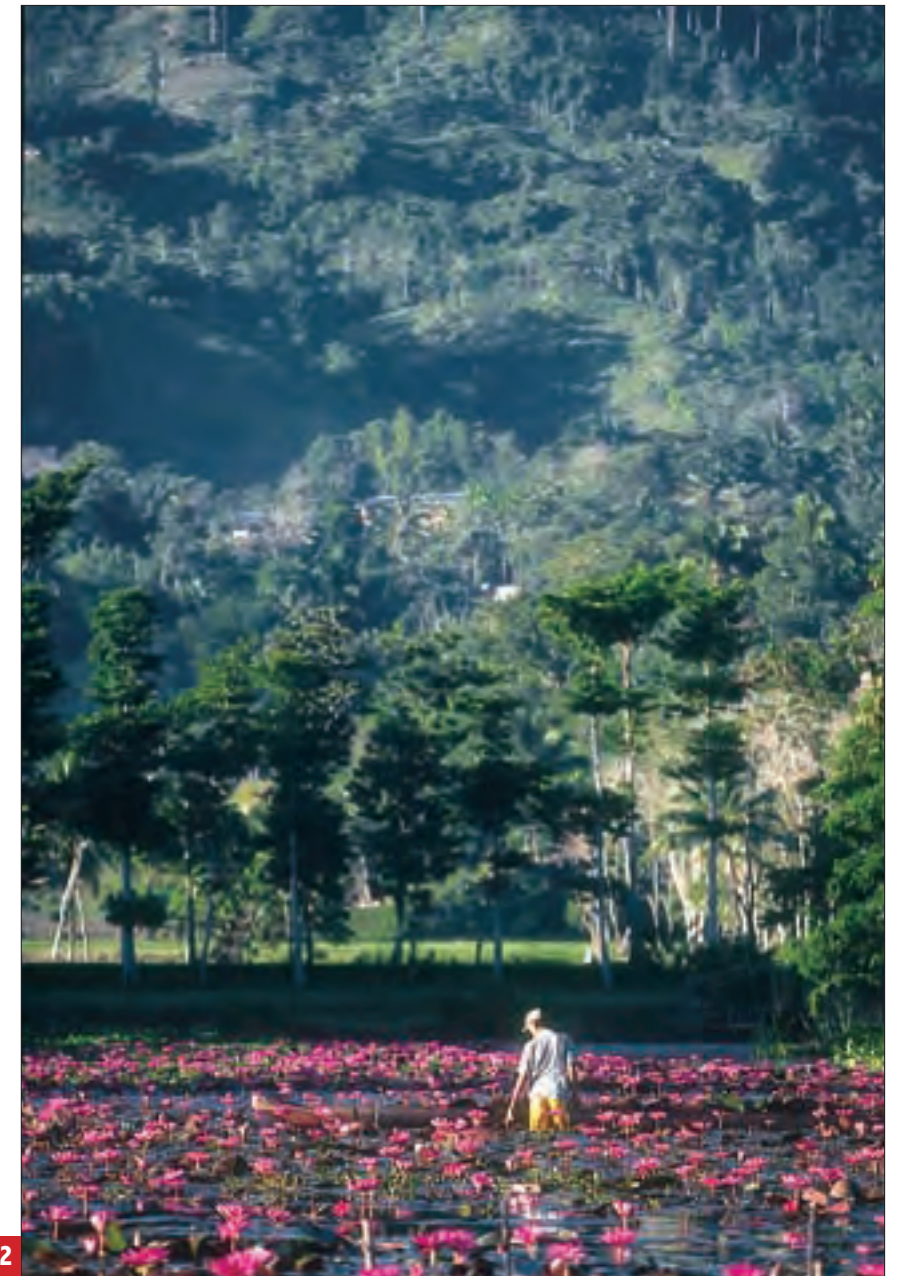
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Described as one of the most beautiful places in the Philippines, **Lake Sebu [32]** lies 3,000 ft. above sea level, a calm, quiet refuge for the concrete-wary soul. Located on the Mountains of South Cotabato, it is home to the T'Boli and B'laan minority groups.

Rising some 9,691 ft. above sea level, the slopes of **Mt. Apo [31]** beckon. It is the Philippines' tallest peak, complete with its own set of obstacles and challenges. But don't be daunted—as any veteran outdoorsman will tell you: the rewards up there are definitely worth the long grueling climb.

The **Agusan Marsh [28]** is an integral part of the Central Mindanao ecosystem, acting as a catch basin absorbing much of the area's rainfall and preventing them from flooding the surrounding communities.

An action plan in the short-term (2002 – 2004), medium-term (2002 – 2007) and long-term (2002 – 2012) has been prepared through a consultative process to represent the activities to be undertaken collectively to implement the NES. Figure 6-1 outlines the action plan on ecotourism.

A regular review of the action plan is critical to assess progress and adjust priorities. The NESC will monitor the implementation of the action plan.

Figure 6 -1 Action Plan for National Ecotourism Strategy

Program/ Activities	Time Frame			Implementing Agencies		Funding Sources
	Short Term 2002-2004	Medium Term 2002-2007	Long Term 2002-2012	Lead	Support	
Key Ecotourism Sites				REC/PAMB	LGU, Local Tourism Council	GAA Bi-lateral Multilateral Private Sector Donors
1. Define the ecotourism products in the key site	●					
2. Determine the target markets and infrastructure	●			REC		
3. Identify existing ecotourism operators in the key site	●			LGU	REC	
4. Develop programs to assist operators meet standards for ecotourism and strengthen the capacity	●			REC	PAMB/ PASU	
5. Review progress in the key sites		●		REC	DTI, NGAs, NGOs	
6. Promote small and medium scale businesses and assess the need for business enhancement		●		LGU		
7. Advocate the implementation of infrastructure requirements in close coordination with the LGUs and concerned NGAs		●		DOT	Concerned Agencies	
8. Produce promotional and visitor information materials		●		LGU	DOT, PVCV	
9. Undertake continuous training for local ecotourism guides and resource management staff		●		REC	Private Sector	
10. Monitor visitor impacts in the key sites		●		REC	PASU/ LGU DOT	
11. Promote ecotourism investment in the area			●	LGU	REC, Local Tourism Council, LGU	
12. Promote networking of sites and communication between and among stakeholders			●	NESC		
13. Develop action plans for emerging and potential key sites			●	REC	REC, LGU	

Product Development 1. Develop standards for ecotourism product 2. Establish system for regulating ecotourism development 3. Implement an accreditation system to encourage the adoption of ecotourism standards by existing operators 4. Promote the use of internationally recognized ecotourism icons/ symbols 5. Advocate the institutionalization of ethics among visitors and operators 6. Establish a system for classifying products and grading of activities 7. Upgrade standards for accreditation to assure a high quality visitor experience and compete globally 8. Prepare institutional guidelines and modules for ecotourism planning and development 9. Formulate new rules and regulations and lobby for legislation to improve the delivery and management of ecotourism	●			NESC		GAA Bi-lateral
	●			NESC	REC	Multilateral
	●			NESC		Private Sector Donors
		●		NESC	LGU, Private Sector	
		●		REC		
		●		NESC	REC, LGUs Private Sector	
			●	NESC	REC, LGU, Private Sector	
			●	NESC	REC	
			●	NESC	REC, LGU, Private Sector	
Marketing and Promotions 1. Establish banner sites as images for marketing Philippines. 2. Promote ecotourism products to existing and potential markets 3. Develop tour programs or itineraries highlighting the products available in the key sites	●			PCVC, REC	NGA, LGU, Private Sector, NGO	GAA Bi-lateral
	●			DOT	PCVC	Multilateral
	●			Private Sector	REC, LGU	Private Sector Donors

4. Forge tie-ups with international wholesalers and tour operators to sell the Philippines as ecotourism destinations	●			DOT	LGU, Private Sector	GAA Bi-lateral
5. Conduct familiarization programs for media, travel agents, airline representatives and tour operators to the key sites	●			REC, LGU	Private Sector	Multilateral Private Sector Donors
6. Organize special events to reinforce market image	●			Private Sector	REC Private Sector,	
7. Refine objectives and develop a new marketing strategy			●	REC	LGU	
Education and Advocacy 1. Develop model ecotourism projects 2. Encourage participation in developing ecotourism programs 3. Mobilize the media support to promote a positive image as an ecotourism destination 4. Produce information, education and communication (IEC) materials on the key sites 5. Establish the ecotourism communication network 6. Encourage participation of organization working for ecotourism in the Philippines 7. Contract national consultants to work with NEPO in providing technical assistance 8. Send NEPO and ETWG members on study mission and exchange programs on ecotourism 9. Integrate ecotourism in educational curriculum at all levels 10. Create a cadre of multi-disciplinary and experienced national consultants	●			NESC PCVC, REC LGU	LGU, Private Sector, REC NGA, LGU, NGO	GAA Bi-lateral
	●					Multilateral
	●			NESC, LGU	PIA, Private Sector	Private Sector Donors
	●			LGU, Private Sector	PCVC, REC	
	●			NESC	REC, LGU	
		●		REC		
		●		NESC		
			●	NESC	DepEd	
			●	NESC		
			●	NESC	NGO, Private Sector	

11. Encourage the participation of individuals and organizations working on ecotourism outside of the Philippines			•	NESC		
Support Program						
1. Conduct training needs for ecotourism at the national, local and site levels	•			NESC	REC, LGU	GAA Bi-lateral Multilateral Private Sector Donors
2. Develop modules for identified training needs	•			NESC	REC, P.S.	
3. Organize communities for ecotourism ventures	•			REC		
4. Implement training programs		•		NESC, NGO,	LGU, P.S.	
5. Develop manuals for community organizing		•		NGA	LGU	
6. Develop programs pertaining to security, health, resource services, waste management and disaster/ emergency management		•		LGU	REC	
				NESC		
National Ecotourism Fund						
1. Undertake consultations and feasibility study in establishing the National Ecotourism Fund	•			NESC	DOT, DBM	GAA Bi-lateral Multilateral Private Sector Donors
2. Develop criteria, guidelines and procedures for accessing the Fund	•			NESC	DOF, DBM	
3. Solicit donors' support to operationalize the Fund	•			NESC, REC	REC	
4. Encourage projects for funding support		•		NESC, REC	LGU, P.S.	
5. Tap other potential sources to sustain the Fund		•		NESC, REC	P.S.	
6. Refine procedures to allow other projects to access the fund			•	NESC, REC		

7.1 APPENDIX 1: EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 111**ESTABLISHING THE GUIDELINES FOR
ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES**

Whereas, it is the policy of the State to develop and promote sustainable tourism while enjoining the participation of the Filipino in enhancing the growth and competitiveness of the Philippine economy;

Whereas, it is the policy of the State to ensure the sustainable use, development, management, protection and conservation of the country's environment and natural resources and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of the present and future generations;

Whereas, the development and promotion of the ecotourism in the Philippines are viable and sustainable activities that will promote the protection of our environment while contributing at the same time to the growth of the economy;

Whereas, there is a need to establish an integrating system that shall warrant and focus government effort to sustain the viability of ecotourism development in the country and;

Whereas, the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) have issued a joint Memorandum Circular for the development of ecotourism in the Philippines.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH EJERCITO ESTRADA, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:

SECTION 1. National Ecotourism Development Council. There is hereby created a National Ecotourism Development Council (NEDC) to be composed of the Secretaries of the following departments: Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, Interior and Local Government, Trade and Industry, Finance, National Economic and Development Authority, and Education, Culture and Sports and representatives from the private sector and non- government organizations. The Chairperson may invite other sectoral representatives in the NEDC. The NEDC, will serve as the policy making body for ecotourism, shall be chaired by the Department of Tourism and Co-chaired by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The NEDC shall have a National Ecotourism Steering Committee (NESC) and Regional Ecotourism Committees (REC) to effectively implement the programs and activities approved by the Council. The NESC shall have the following composition:

- DOT Undersecretary for Planning – Chairperson
- DENR Undersecretary for Environment – Co-chairperson
- Director, DENR - Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau
- Director, DOT- Office of Tourism Development Planning
- Director, DOT- Office of Product Research and Development
- Director, DOT- Office of Tourism Standards
- Director, Department of Interior and Local Government
- Private Sector Representative/s
- Non-Government Organization/s

The REC, on the other hand, shall be composed of the following:

- Regional Director, DOT – Chairperson
- Regional Executive Director, DENR – Co-Chairperson
- Regional Technical Director for Environmental Management and Protected Area Sector (EMPAS), DENR
- NEDA-PCSD
- Private Sector Representative
- NGO Representative
- Concerned Local Government Unit Representative

The Chairmanship of the Council and its committees shall have a term of three (3) years and shall be held on rotation basis by DOT and DENR.

SECTION 2. Functions and Responsibilities of the Ecotourism Committees.

The NESC shall be responsible for the following:

- a.) Formulate and develop a national ecotourism strategy and program for the promotion and development of ecotourism in the country;
- b.) Formulate and recommend policies, guidelines and programs relevant to the development and promotion of ecotourism in the country;
- c.) Review, evaluate and approve major ecotourism project proposals;
- d.) Devise an accreditation and incentives mechanism for ecotourism projects;
- e.) Conduct consultation with the local population to be affected by ecotourism development to integrate their cultural values and beliefs in ecotourism plans and programs which may be formulated through their own initiative;
- f.) Provide technical and financial assistance to communities which are included in the network of ecotourism sites to be established by the Council;
- g.) Supervise and monitor the implementation of policies, guidelines, ecotourism programs/ projects/ activities in the country; and

- h.) Perform such other activities as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of the Order.

The REC shall have the following functions:

- a.) Review, evaluate, approve and monitor ecotourism projects in their region;
- b.) Implement policies, guidelines, programs, projects and activities formulated by the Council;
- c.) Identify network of ecotourism sites in the region;
- d.) Recommend plans and programs for ecotourism; and
- e.) Perform such other activities as may be prescribed by the council.

SEC. 3. Secretariat Support. The NEDC shall establish an Ecotourism Technical Working Group to provide technical and administrative support to the NEDC and NESC in the implementation of the Order. The NEDC may also request the services and support of other government agencies necessary in the development and implementation of ecotourism programs in the country.

SEC. 4. Formulation of a National Ecotourism Strategy. A National Ecotourism Strategy shall be prepared by the Council to provide an integrated management plan which shall warrant a comprehensive direction for the future of ecotourism in the country by recognizing issues and problems for its sustainable development and recommend feasible approaches in addressing these issues. The Strategy shall be formulated in consultation with concerned stakeholders in the environment and tourism sectors including indigenous peoples and local communities to be affected by ecotourism development.

SEC. 5. National Ecotourism Program. To complement and support the aforementioned Strategy, a set of National Ecotourism Programs shall be developed. The program shall encompass the major aspects of ecotourism, which are: 1) development, management and protection of identified ecotourism sites; 2) product enhancement and development; 3) environmental education and information campaign; 4) support programs for community stewardship and livelihood development.

SEC. 6. Operational Budget. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Department of Tourism (DOT) shall allocate funds from their respective regular budgets which shall be used for the operations of the NEDC. The NEDC is also empowered to generate funds through an appropriate financial mechanism and to receive aids, grants and/or donations. The funds generated from this mechanism shall be placed in an Ecotourism Fund to finance the various ecotourism programs and activities pursuant to the mandate of the NEDC.

SEC. 7. Repealing Clause. All executive orders, circulars, rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. Separability Clause. If any portion of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, any provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. Effectivity Clause. This order shall take effect immediately.

DONE in the City of Manila, this 17th day of June, in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and ninety nine.

(SIGNED)

PRES. JOSEPH EJERCITO ESTRADA

(SIGNED)

RONALDO B. ZAMORA

Executive Secretary

7.2 APPENDIX 2: NEDC RESOLUTION NO. 2001 – 01

**ADOPTING THE OPERATING GUIDELINES FOR EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 111 –
“ESTABLISHING THE GUIDELINES FOR ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT
IN THE PHILIPPINES”.**

Whereas, Executive Order No. 111 series of 1999 established the institutional mechanism and guidelines for development and promotion of ecotourism in the Philippines;

Whereas, on 19 December 1999 an Ad-hoc Committee was convened to draw up the implementing guidelines of Executive Order No. 111;

Whereas, on 04 February 2000 a technical workshop on Executive Order No. 111 was held to formulate the operating and institutional mechanism for the implementation of Executive Order No. 111;

Whereas, the First Meeting of the National Ecotourism Steering Committee held on 02 June 2000 recommended the adoption of operating guidelines for Executive Order No. 111;

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the following are adopted as the operating guidelines of Executive Order No. 111:

SECTION 1. General Provisions

1.1 Basic Policy. The State shall develop and promote ecotourism as a tool for sustainable development to support the development, management, protection and conservation of the country’s environment, natural resources and cultural heritage. The State shall establish an integrating system to focus greater efforts to sustain the viability of ecotourism development in the country.

1.2 Definition of Terms. For purposes of these Guidelines, the following terms shall mean as follows:

Ecotourism/Ecological Tourism – a form of sustainable tourism within a natural and cultural heritage area where community participation, protection and management of natural resources, culture and indigenous knowledge and practices, environmental education and ethics as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host communities and satisfaction of visitors

Ecotourism Activities – passive and active forms of events including but not limited to bird watching, nature photography, hiking, diving, kayaking, mountaineering and caving

Ecotourism Facilities – accommodation, lodging facilities and related amenities which blend with the natural and cultural environment of the area

Ecotourism Resources – natural and cultural assets that attract visitors including but not limited to landscapes, endemic or rare flora and fauna, cultural festivals and historical monuments

Ecotourism Services – basic services for tourism activities including but not limited to transportation, food, guiding and interpretation of services

Ecotourism Product – a combination of ecotourism resources, facilities, activities and services resulting in enhanced commitment to protect the natural and cultural heritage areas

Ecotourism Strategy – coordinated set of planned actions for the development, promotion and management of ecotourism destinations

Major Ecotourism Project – an integrated ecotourism development project located in a clearly delineated area such as tourist zones, tourism estates, protected areas or such other areas as may be proclaimed/designated. The project may consist of several components of ecotourism such as attractions, facilities, services, and activities

Minor Ecotourism Project – a specific ecotourism project located either within or outside of the tourist zones, tourism estates, protected areas or such other areas as proclaimed/designated.

Natural Areas – areas that remain in their natural state, thus, maintaining biodiversity and ecological processes

Protected Areas – identified portions of land and water set asideby reason of their unique physical and biological significance, managed to enhance biological diversity and protected against destructive human exploitation

Recreational Zones – areas of high recreational, tourism, educational and/ or environmental values where ecotourism may be allowed in protected areas

Sustainable Development – meeting the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own

Sustainable Tourism — tourism that improves the quality of life of the host community, provides quality experience to visitors and maintains the integrity of the natural and cultural resources

Tourism — activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes except for those activities that will be remunerated from within the area visited. The usual environment of a person consists of a certain area around his/her place of residence plus all other places he/she frequently visits

Tourism Estate — large tract of land with well-defined boundaries and prescribed carrying capacities of tourism facilities and activities located in priority areas identified in the Philippine Tourism Master Plan, Regional Tourism Master Plans as well as those proclaimed by the President and/or by Acts of Congress. Such lands shall be suitable for integrated tourism development under a unified and continuous management

Tourist Zone — geographic area with well-defined boundaries proclaimed as such by the President and/or by acts of Congress. No development projects for any purpose shall be initiated and introduced within the zone prior to the formulation of a Tourism Development Plan

1.3 Application and Scope. These Guidelines shall apply to the development, establishment and promotion of ecotourism in the country that shall uplift the conditions of the local/host community and protect the environment and preserve cultural heritage. Specifically, the Guidelines shall apply to:

- 1.3.1** Areas that have been identified or set aside for sustainable tourism purposes pursuant to law, presidential proclamation, executive order or other legal issuances without prejudice to prior rights and other pertinent laws;
- 1.3.2** Other areas that may have ecotourism potentials not set aside by laws but identified in the National Ecotourism Strategy/ Master Plan and/or by the National Ecotourism Development Council (NEDC).
- 1.3.3** Ecotourism activities, services and facilities which are offered to visitors.

SECTION 2. Composition of NEDC, NESC and RECs

2.1 The National Ecotourism Development Council (NEDC) shall be composed of the Secretaries of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, Interior and Local Government, Trade and Industry, Finance, Education, Culture and Sports, and the Secretary General of the National Economic and Development Authority as well as representatives from the private sector and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).

2.2 The National Ecotourism Steering Committee (NESC) shall be composed of the Department of Tourism (DOT) Undersecretary for Planning, Product Development and Coordination, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Environment, now Policy and Technical Services, DENR Director for Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB), DOT Director for Tourism Development Planning, DOT Director for Product Research and Development, DOT Director for Tourism Standards, and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Director for Bureau of Local Government Development (BLGD). It will also have representative/s from the private sector and NGO(s).

2.3 The Regional Ecotourism Committees (RECs) shall be composed of the DOT Regional Director; DENR Regional Executive Director, DENR Regional Technical Director for Environmental Management and Protected Area Sector, now Assistant Regional Executive Director for Operations, and representatives from the National Economic and Development Authority-Philippine Council on Sustainable Development (NEDA-PCSD), private sector, NGO and concerned local government unit.

SECTION 3. Terms of Office

3.1 The NEDC, NESC and RECs shall be chaired on a three-(3)-year rotation basis by the DOT and DENR. For the first year of implementation, the DOT shall serve as the Chairperson of the Council and its Committees.

3.2 The membership of the private sector and NGO(s) to the Council and its Committees shall likewise be for three (3) years. However, such term may be extended for another three (3) years subject to the approval of the Council.

SECTION 4. NGO and Private Sector Representatives

4.1 There shall be three (3) representatives each from the private sector and the NGO/s to the NEDC and NESC.

4.2 To ensure proper sectoral representation, one private sector representative shall come from the academe while one NGO representative shall come from the indigenous peoples.

4.3 The private sector and NGO representatives shall be designated by the NEDC pursuant to the criteria adopted for the purpose.

4.4 The Chairperson, with the concurrence of the Co-chair, may invite other sectoral representatives to the NEDC and NESC meeting/s to serve as resource person/s or consultant/s on specific matters under consideration.

SECTION 5. Powers and Functions

5.1 The NEDC shall serve as the policy-making body for ecotourism.

5.2 The NESC shall be responsible for the following:

- 5.2.1 Formulate and develop a national ecotourism strategy and program for the promotion and development of ecotourism in the country;
- 5.2.2 Formulate and recommend policies, guidelines and programs relevant to the development and promotion of ecotourism in the country;
- 5.2.3 Review, evaluate and approve major ecotourism project proposals;
- 5.2.4 Devise an accreditation and incentives mechanisms for ecotourism projects in close consultation with the Department of Finance;
- 5.2.5 Conduct consultation with the local population to be affected by ecotourism development to integrate their cultural values and beliefs in ecotourism plans and programs which may be formulated through their own initiative;
- 5.2.6 Provide technical and financial assistance to communities which are included in the network of ecotourism sites to be established by the Council;
- 5.2.7 Supervise and monitor implementation of policies, guidelines, ecotourism programs/ projects/ activities in the country; and
- 5.2.8 Perform such other activities as may be necessary to carry out the objective of Executive Order No. 111 or as may be designated by the NEDC.

5.3 The RECs shall have the following functions:

- 5.3.1 Review, evaluate, approve and monitor minor ecotourism projects in their respective regions;
- 5.3.2 Implement policies, guidelines, programs, projects and activities formulated by the Council;
- 5.3.3 Identify network of ecotourism sites in the region;
- 5.3.4 Recommend plans and programs for ecotourism; and
- 5.3.5 Perform such other activities as may be prescribed by the Council.

SECTION 6. Meetings

- 6.1 The NEDC shall hold regular quarterly meetings. However, upon the recommendation of the NESC, the Chairperson may with the concurrence of the Co-chair call a special meeting of the Council to discuss urgent issues and concerns. The Chairperson and Co-chair of the NESC may be included during the Council meeting.
- 6.2 The NESC shall hold regular monthly meetings every last Thursday of each month. However, the NESC Chairperson may call a special meeting from time to time as the need arises.
- 6.3 The RECs shall hold regular monthly meetings. The RECs may also call a special meeting from time to time as the need arises.

SECTION 7. Secretariat Support

- 7.1 An Ecotourism Technical Working Group (ETWG) is hereby established to provide secretariat support - both technical and administrative, to the Council and its Committees.
- 7.2 The ETWG shall be composed of three or more technical staff each from the DOT and DENR. However, the composition of the ETWG may be expanded to include other government agencies necessary in the development and implementation of ecotourism programs in the country.
- 7.3 The ETWG shall perform the following duties and responsibilities:
 - 7.3.1 Review and evaluate project applications as to the completeness of the documentation and compliance with the guidelines set by the Council and NESC for the approval of major ecotourism projects;
 - 7.3.2 Provide technical assistance to project proponents in the completion of necessary documents and, when necessary, extend support in the design and preparation of proposals through training;
 - 7.3.3 Provide assistance in the formulation of the National Ecotourism Strategy and the implementation of the National Ecotourism Program;
 - 7.3.4 Monitor the implementation of the National Ecotourism Strategy and Program as well as the activities of the RECs;
 - 7.3.5 Coordinate the regular meetings of the NEDC and NESC including the documentation and preparation of necessary materials; and
 - 7.3.6 Perform all other activities and functions that may be deemed necessary by the NEDC and NESC.

SECTION 8. National Ecotourism Strategy

- 8.1 A National Ecotourism Strategy shall be formulated and adopted to provide an integrated management plan and comprehensive direction for the development and promotion of ecotourism in the Philippines.

The Strategy shall incorporate an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats including the critical issues and problems in the implementation of the ecotourism program. It shall also establish the criteria for the selection and identification of network of ecotourism sites.

- 8.2 The Strategy shall be formulated in close consultation with all concerned stakeholders in the environment and tourism sectors including national and local governments, NGO, private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities.

8.3 As far as necessary, the Strategy shall recognize and integrate ongoing initiatives of any organization or individual at the national and/or local levels to harness skills, expertise, experiences and learnings from project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

8.4 Until such time that the National Ecotourism Strategy is completed, the NESC/ REC shall review and approve ecotourism projects based on established criteria for major and minor projects.

SECTION 9. National Ecotourism Program

9.1 A National Ecotourism Program shall be developed pursuant to the National Ecotourism Strategy which shall encompass the following:

- 9.1.1 development, management and protection of identified ecotourism sites;
- 9.1.2 product development and enhancement;
- 9.1.3 accreditation;
- 9.1.4 investment promotion; and
- 9.1.5 support programs for community stewardship and livelihood development.

Section 10. Funds

10.1 The DOT and DENR/ PAWB shall allocate funds from their respective regular budgets to be used for the operations of the NEDC, NESC and the RECs.

10.2 The NEDC shall generate funds through an appropriate financial mechanism and shall receive aids, grants and/or donations. The funds generated from this mechanism shall be placed in an Ecotourism Fund to be administered by the NESC to finance various ecotourism programs and activities.

SECTION 11. Effectivity

These Operating Guidelines shall take effect immediately.

ADOPTED this 19th day of December, 2000, at Manila, Philippines.

(Signed)

GEMMA CRUZ-ARANETA

Secretary, Department of Tourism
and Chairperson, NEDC

7.3 APPENDIX 3: LIST OF EO 111 BODIES

NATIONAL ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Secretary RICHARD J. GORDON	DOT
Secretary HEHERSON T. ALVAREZ	DENR
Secretary JOSE D. LINA, JR.	DILG
Secretary MANUEL A. ROXAS II	DTI
Secretary RAUL S. ROCO	Dep Ed
Secretary JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO	DOF
Secretary DANTE B. CANLAS	NEDA
Dr. HELENA Z. BENITEZ	Private Sector
Mr. ALBERTO A. LIM	Private Sector
Mr. VICTOR A. CONSUNJI	Private Sector
Atty. DOMINGO EGON Q. CAYOSA	NGO
Atty. DANTE A. CARANDANG	NGO
Mr. MARIANO G. PAGANG	NGO

NATIONAL ECOTOURISM STEERING COMMITTEE

Undersecretary EVELYN B. PANTIG	DOT
Undersecretary DEMETRIO L. IGNACIO	DENR
Director WILFRIDO S. POLLISCO	DENR/PAWB
Director TERESITA M. MISTAL	DILG
Director ELIZABETH F. NELLE	DOT
Director VICTORIA V. JASMIN	DOT
OIC ROLANDO CAÑIZAL	DOT
Mr. JOSE MA. LORENZO P. TAN	Private Sector
Ms. REMEDIOS A. RAYMUNDO	Private Sector
Dr. IGNACIO S. PABLO	Private Sector
Dr. DELFIN J. GANAPIN	NGO
Sis. LUZ EMMANUEL SORIANO	NGO
Dra. JULIE CABATO	NGO

NATIONAL ECOTOURISM TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Mr. ROLANDO CAÑIZAL	DOT
Ms. VERA BUENSUCESO	DOT
Mr. WARNER ANDRADA	DOT
Ms. ARLENE ALIPIO	DOT
Mr. ALEX MACATUNO	DOT
Mr. ALAIN C. QUESEA	DOT
Ms. MA. LIZA RAMOS DEL MUNDO	PCVC
Ms. CONSOLACION CRISOSTOMO	DENR
Ms. PRISCILLA CALIMAG	DENR-PAWB

Mr. VICTORINO MENDOZA	— DENR-PAWB
Ms. THELMA PEREZ	— DENR-PAWB
Ms. GLORIA RAMIREZ	— DENR-PAWB
Ms. ANGELINA N. CORTEZ	— DILG
Ms. THELMA Q. ABDULRAHMAN	— DILG
Mr. MIKE REYES	— NEDA

REGIONAL ECOTOURISM COMMITTEES

NCR

Director REYNATO L. CHUA	— DOT
Regional Exec. Director CORAZON C. DAVIS	— DENR

Region 1

Director ERNESTO B. MALAY JR.	— DOT
Exec. Director. VICTOR J. ANCHETA	— DENR
Assist. Director ISIDRO NALUPA	— DENR
Director LEONARDO N. QUITOS JR.	— NEDA
Director MANUEL V. BIASON	— DILG
Ms. MA LUZ O. BOLONG	— PRIVATE SECTOR
Dr. ROBERTO DELOS REYES	— NGO

Region 2

Director. BLESSIDA G. DIWA	— DOT
Regional Exec. Director ALFREDO PASCUAL	— DENR
Mr. GAUDENCIO BARTOLOME	— DENR
Director CARMELITA RIMANDO	— NEDA
Mr. GERMAN C. AGATEP	— PRIVATE SECTOR
Mr. OLIMPIO MUÑOZ	— NGO

Region 3

Director RONALDO TIOTUICO	— DOT
Regional Exec. Director. GREGORIO O. NISPEROS	— DENR
Ms. LORMELYN E. CLAUDIO	— DENR
Director CONRADO J. OLIVEROS	— DOST
Director REMEGIO A. MERCADO	— NEDA
Mr. ROMEO MAGLAQUI	— PRIVATE SECTOR
Mr. ED MANANGU	— NGO

Region 4

Director LOUELLA C. JURILLA	— DOT
Regional Exec. Director SAMUEL PEÑAFIEL	— DENR
Assist. Director ELVERO C. EUSEBIO	— DENR
Director OSCAR BALBASTRO	— NEDA
Mr. ANDREW NOCON	— PRIVATE SECTOR
Ms. IRMA MARCELO	— NGO

Region 5

Director MARIA ONG-RAVANILLA	— DOT
Regional Exec. Director OSCAR HAMADA	— DENR
Mr. NATHAN SANTOS	— DENR
Director MARLENE RODRIGUEZ	— NEDA
Ms. DOROTHY NAVARRO	— NGO

Region 6

Director EDWIN G. TROMPETA	— DOT
Regional Exec. Director RAOUL GEOLLEGUE	— DENR
Assist. Director CELSO B LORIEGA	— DENR
Atty. TRUMAN T. CAINGLET	— NEDA
Mr. JORGE ABORDO	— NGO

Region 7

Director PATRIA AURORA B. ROA	— DOT
Regional Exec. Director AUGUSTUS MOMONGAN	— DENR
Mr. ALLAN ARRANQUEZ	— DENR
Director ROMEO ESCANDOR	— NEDA
Ms. MA. MONETTE FLORES	— NGO

Region 8

Director NORMA M. MORANTE	— DOT
Regional Exec. Director PEDRO V. CALIXTO	— DENR
Ms. CORAZON H. MAKABENTA	— DENR
Atty. BUENA VENTURA C. GO-SOCO JR.	— NEDA
Ms. CLARITA P NAPOLES	— PRIVATE SECTOR
Ms. MARGARITA T. DE LA CRUZ	— NGO

Region 9

Director RICARDO A. SAN JUAN	— DOT
Regional Exec. Director MAXIMO O. DICHOSO	— DENR
Asst. Director ROGELIO RAGASA	— DENR
Director RAFIEL G. ABARRO	— PRIVATE SECTOR
Datu HAMID A. GUMAGA	— NGO

Region 10

Director DOROTHY JEAN B. PABAYO	— DOT
Regional Exec. Director FERNANDO P. QUILILAN	— DENR
Asst. Director SABDULLAH C. ABUBACAR	— DENR
Director RAYMUND E. FONOLLERA	— NEDA
Mr. ROEL S. UY	— PRIVATE SECTOR
Mr. MANUEL VALDEHUEZA	— NGO

Region 11

Director SONIA GARCIA	— DOT
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Regional Exec. Director CLARENCE L. BAGUILAT	—	DENR
Asst. Director BIENVENIDO LIPAYON	—	DENR
Director AURORA R. PELAYO	—	NEDA
Ms. WANDA TEO	—	PRIVATE SECTOR
Mr. DENNIS SALVADOR	—	NGO

Region 12

Director SOHURA T. DIMAAMPAO	—	DOT
Regional Exec. Director MUSA C. SARUANG	—	DENR
Assist. Director VINCENTE Y. CURTIZ	—	DENR
Mr. USOP LALAO	—	NEDA
Engr. CARPONIO RUSIANA JR.	—	PRIVATE SECTOR
Atty. ERMELO N. LIBRE	—	NGO
Mr. FRERDERICO FINO	—	LGU

Region 13

Director MA. SALOME T. SALCEDO	—	DOT
Regional Exec. Director ELIAS R. SERAPI	—	DENR
Assist. Director ZOSIMO GELACIO	—	DENR
Ms. CARMELITA S. COCHINGCO	—	NEDA
Ms. EUFROCELES D. URDARBE	—	PRIVATE SECTOR
Mr. RENATO JOSE C. VILLANUEVA	—	NGO

7.4 APPENDIX 4: ECOTOURISM MARKETING PLAN

An Ecotourism Marketing Plan is designed for implementation by DOT and PCVC and is included as a short-term priority in the NEP. Funding for the implementation of marketing activities will come from DOT’s component of the NEP, and the scope and timing of implementation will need to be assessed in view of funding availability. Only cost-effective recommendations have been made in recognition of funding constraints. Engaging the Philippines’ travel industry, as active participants will be key to success.

7.4.1 MARKETING OBJECTIVES

The Ecotourism Marketing Program provides DOT with the opportunity:

- To establish the Philippines as a credible ecotourism destination in international source markets, using images from the Banner Sites.
- To refresh and revive the Philippines’ international market image to attract new ecotourism segments in a program integrated with PCVC’s campaigns.
- To create pride and awareness in the Philippines’ natural and cultural resources with a domestic ecotourism.
- To facilitate information flows from product to market so as to attract increased private sector investment and encourage new community-based operators.
- To support the ecotourism efforts of LGUs and NGOs to bring direct and indirect tourism revenue and benefits to local communities.

7.4.2 TARGET MARKETS

Primary Targets

Target markets should build on current priorities, and expand the market base to attract visitors with proven interest in ecotourism products.

- Short haul: Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan.
- Long haul: North America, and Australasia
- Regional expatriates.
- Balikbayans.
- Domestic segments.

Secondary Targets

- Short haul: Other Asian segments (Malaysia, Singapore etc.)
- Long haul Europe (UK, Germany, France, Scandinavian countries, Benelux)

DOT and PCVC can build on current travel trade networks and concentrate marketing efforts in the short and long haul primary markets for maximum impact and cost effectiveness. As a core strategy, direct current business and beach segments into ecotourism by offering modules of ecotourism and activity-based adventure as “business-plus” and “beach-plus” options. Seek out and promote to segments of target markets whose travel motivations match the Philippines ecotourism and diving products.

7.4.3 RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Advocate for market-led development in ecotourism areas based on sound research and monitoring with DOT and DENR. Improve the collection and analysis of accurate and timely arrival information in ecotourism and protected areas. NEPO and the Ecotourism Network could play a pivotal role in the collection and correlation of data.

7.4.4 DESTINATION AWARENESS

Market Image

A destination market image needs to reflect reality and accurately pitch visitor expectations. Deliverable tour programs and itineraries must support market images. The Philippines needs to be branded and positioned in source markets with a strong and distinct market image based on the Banner Sites that features ecotourism products, along with current beach and nightlife images. Unique selling points from the Banner Sites might include: diving coral reefs, wreck diving, whale sharks, whales / dolphins, tarsier, Philippines eagle, bat flight, river running, local boats, volcanoes (Mt. Mayon) and mountain trekking. Establishing the Philippines’ people as rich in culture, English-speaking, warm and hospitable. The current WOW campaign could be expanded to include such taglines as “Walk On the Wildside”, “Wealth of Whales” “Watch our Wildlife” etc. Branding the whole country with an ecotourism image could include an “Eco-Philippines” or “WOW-Eco” campaign.

Market Positioning

Positioning needs to be targeted regionally to meet specific market preferences, reinforcing the Philippines’ products with an internationally competitive edge. The following examples should be considered.

- Long-haul North America, Australasia, Europe coming on beach-plus and combination nature, adventure special interest visitors. Regional Western expatriates have similar preferences.
- Scuba diving (Tubbataha, Apo Reef, Palawan, Cebu etc).
- Marine mammal encounters (Tañon Strait, Bohol, Donsol).
- Cordillera rice terraces and hikes.
- Genuine cultural village visits such as Aetas (Pinatubo and Subic), Cordillera, Batanes, Mindanao.
- Niche markets such as bird watchers, surfers (Siargao) and religious visitors.
 - Short-haul Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan and other Asians seeking add-on “business-plus”, “beach-plus”, “gaming-plus” etc. short breaks.
 - Volcano summit climbs (Kanlaon, Mayon, Pinatubo, Taal etc).
 - Scuba diving (Cebu, Palawan, Boracay, Batangas etc.).
 - Soft coastal adventure such as snorkeling, sea kayaking, canopy walkways, marine mammal viewing etc. (Hundred Islands, Palawan, Olango, Tañon Strait).
 - Organized soft adventure packages such as river running, canoeing, cave visits etc.
 - Managed cultural village visits and walks (Cordillera etc).
 - Surfing (Siargao).
- Domestic segments and Balikbayans on short breaks and add-ons to religious holidays.
 - Fiestas, religious festivals and pilgrimages (Camiguin, Peñablanca, etc.).
 - Rafting and kayaking (Chico, Cagayan, Cagayan de Oro etc.).
 - Adventure activities such as volcano and mountain climbing, mountain biking, wildlife viewing (bats, tarsiers, Philippine eagles, whales / dolphins etc.).
 - Outdoor education visits to caves, forests and waterfalls including camping, school outings etc.
 - Special ecotourism events such as Adventure Races (Pinatubo, Davao etc).

7.4.5 OVERSEAS MARKETING ACTIVITIES

International marketing activities will include a combination of the following:

Market Representation

Re-orient DOT’s current, market representation arrangements in major source markets to help position the Philippines as a destination offering quality ecotourism products.

International Wholesalers and Tour Operators

Seek and support international specialist travel wholesalers and tour operators. This will be the most cost effective and efficient means of marketing and selling ecotourism, particularly in long haul target markets. Niche wholesalers such as special interest (nature, culture, wildlife, ecotourism, adventure, etc.) and dive operators are of particular interest.

Trade Fairs and Travel Shows

Feature ecotourism at mainstream travel shows and special interest fairs for both the trade and consumers as a cost-effective means of creating destination awareness, especially when supported by the private sector.

Sales Missions, Agent Seminars and Road Shows

Combine sales missions with trade fairs in target markets for maximum cost effectiveness. Travel agent seminars are useful when closely coordinated with selected international wholesalers and Philippines operators, and arranged well in advance. Packages of Key Sites and images of Banner Sites should be promoted.

Joint Marketing

Opportunities for joint marketing initiatives with neighbors and regional airlines (such as PAL, Singapore Airlines, Thai International etc.) can help establish ecotourism in the Philippines and tap into tourism flows, especially when security conditions improve. These might include joint promotions with diving and “Coral Triangle” coastal resource tourism in and around the Sulu and Sulawesi seas, and ecotourism circuits with ASEAN neighbors.

7.4.6 PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Promotional activities that have proven successful in other destinations include:

Agents Familiarization Trips

There can be no better promotion than to get key international ecotourism and adventure sales personnel to experience a destination first hand. DOT, PCVC and the NESCC can actively foster targeting agents’ familiarization trips to ecotourism areas, especially to Key Sites, as a cost effective and useful strategy to promote destination awareness in partnership with airlines, international wholesalers and Philippines travel operators.

Visiting Media Programs

Actively continue the visiting media programs, especially from local and international publications and television that reinforce the ecotourism market image, in partnership with airlines, wholesalers and operators. Focus should be on the Key Sites and ecotourism products, adjusted for the different target markets.

Advertising

Be cautious with advertising in all source markets, as it can be very costly and ineffective unless carefully planned, targeted and monitored. Consider ecotourism advertising in the travel trade and special interest press in medium and long haul targets. Rates in trade publications are considerably lower than general interest media, and trade advertising supports the trade strategies in these markets.

Documentary and Feature Films

Encourage the filming of wildlife, diving and adventure documentaries and even feature films in the Philippines as being a cost-effective means of promotion, especially when the market image is reinforced in target markets.

Books and CD ROMs

Actively encourage the publication of books and CD ROMs on ecotourism activities in the Philippines. Recognize that certain guidebooks (such as the Lonely Planet series) are very influential in determining patterns of travel, particularly with adventurous FITs.

Special Events

Annual and one-off sporting events and cultural festivals have been well developed for tourism in the Philippines. Multi-sports events, volcano races, river running and surfing competitions all reinforce the image. Facilitate partnerships with the private sector so special events can, where appropriate, be managed, operated and marketed as commercially viable businesses. Maximize the coverage and exposure opportunities presented for the Philippines by marketing activities linked with International Year of the Mountains 2002, International Year of Ecotourism 2002, and so on.

7.4.7 SALES PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

There is a range of media options to use in promoting ecotourism in the Philippines. The use of each depends on the product and target markets. Effective promotional tools include:

Brochures and Printed Material

New national destination marketing brochures will feature the Banner Sites, reflecting the market image. A special interest brochure could be a useful sales tool. A new series of high quality posters and stickers of extraordinary images from the Key Sites will help establish the ecotourism market image, serve as give-away items and provide a source of revenue.

Sales promotional material promoting each individual Banner Sites can be designed at a national level in order to project a similar market image. DENR, LGUs, RECS and the National Ecotourism Network can assist with information for these publications at the local level.

Web Sites

Ensure the Philippines' web sites contain the new destination brochures and images. Websites need to be regularly updated to be effective. Link web sites with international and local agents and NGOs for additional exposure.

Promotional Videos and Audio Visuals

Videos are valuable promotional tools not only for operators but also for motivators and media and need to reflect ecotourism activities. They can be widely used for trade fairs, sales missions and seminars.

Photographic Resources

Give priority to building up a photographic resource library of the highest quality visuals reflecting the ecotourism market image based in the NEPO. Fresh photographic images are essential to support the newly designed promotional material, web site, audio visual presentations, and for the use of operators and wholesalers. A number of highly competent professional photographers have worked in the Philippines. The NESC and

the National Ecotourism Network can help identify them, solicit their assistance and coordinate their contributions.

7.4.8 ECOTOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Successful ecotourism marketing needs to be closely integrated with product development. The NESC, NEPO and National Ecotourism Network are all well placed to contribute to ecotourism marketing by ensuring DOT and PCVC has the most up-to-date information and detailed knowledge on ecotourism products in the Philippines, especially in Key Sites. Ecotourism market linkages and information flows can be fostered with the grass roots level through the RECs, PAMBs and LGUs.