

# TPB spotlight

A Quarterly e-Magazine of the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2020

## 2020 GAME-CHANGING YEAR TOWARDS A FUN-READY FUTURE

### MICECONLINE 2020

SUCCESSFULLY PIVOTS  
TO UNCHARTED  
TERRITORY

TRAVEL  
PHILIPPINES  
GOES ONLINE

### DOT & TPB LAUNCH

MOTOURISMO PHILIPPINES  
CAMPAIGN TO REBUILD  
LOCAL TRAVELING  
CONFIDENCE



# spotlight

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COVER PHOTO:  
Pasko Na! campaign

## On The SPOT

*This quarter's Spotlight pays tribute to the hard work that the tourism sector continues to do to enable us to cultivate the adversities we faced and continue to overcome*



I wonder how you would look back at 2020.

And this question became even more interesting when one of the gifts I received over the holidays from a news cable company was a set of things that included a mallet, a protective eye gear and a styrofoam figure with 2020 carved in it. The gift came with a note instructing the recipient to wear the goggles, and beat the hell out of 2020 as a symbolic and cathartic way to say goodbye to the year that was.

I wanted to follow the instructions as a matter of impulse, but after some reflection, I sent the goggles and the 2020 styro-figure back to the office, kept the hammer for future use and picked up and read through Fareed Zakaria's book, "Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World", which also came in the box.

My own take-away from the book is that the courage we cultivated, shared and demonstrated at TPB to carve new paths for innovative, customer-centric and relevant initiatives through the pandemic year of 2020, proves to be a fundamental yet pioneering value that steered us, as a team, through the challenges, and brought us to the milestone accomplishments we committed to achieve with pride, honor, patriotism and a deep sense of fulfilment.

This quarter's Spotlight pays tribute to the hard work that the tourism sector, including the TPB, continues to do to enable us to cultivate the adversities we faced and continue to overcome, and allow us to flourish with the best use of our talents, shared dedication and judicious deployment of resources entrusted to us.

So, how do I look back at 2020? My intuitive sense is to try not to remember the horrors of the year, but a well-discerned perspective leaves me actually grateful for the many blessings that were showered upon us through the year. They are too many to be enumerated here, and I am confident you are aware of them because you were part of many of them, if not, being the blessing in itself.

May this issue spark the same sense of gratitude in your hearts and inspire you to strengthen our partnerships in the coming year.

On behalf of the entire TPB, I wish you a renewed sense of optimism, joy and hope as we embark on shared initiatives ahead. May "the Lord crown your year with His goodness."

*Are allones*

MARIA ANTHONETTE C. VELASCO-ALLONES



# TPB 2020

## Game-changing Year Towards a **FUN-READY** Future



Despite the pandemic drastically altering global tourism, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines forges on to map out a compelling masterplan to make the Philippines a preferred destination for safe, uniquely diverse, and fun travel experience.

By 2025, the TPB envisions a more secure and enjoyable Philippine travel experience for domestic and international travelers by continuing to partner with various private and public stakeholders to further promote the islands of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao as destinations of breathtaking sceneries, exquisite cuisine, colorful festivals, diverse culture, and just plainly good people.

“We have also adopted three new strategies to help the tourism industry recover and thrive anew amid the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and to assist both TPB’s clients and the private sector towards these goals,” said TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones.

These strategies include: Partnerships as Pathways where stronger collaboration will be forged with partners from the national government, local government units (LGUs), and the private sector, leveraging on their collective strengths to promote and market the Philippines; the SMARTourism program where the TBP has integrated innovation in its operations by strengthening its digital presence, ensuring data-driven planning, and expanding other tools for promotions and marketing, among them a progressive web application (PWA) called Travel Philippines; and Safe Bangon Turismo, a

campaign to launch the Bounce Back Philippines Philippine Tourism program and re-establish the country as the ideal destination for identified customer interests.

“We believe that safe domestic travelling is now attainable. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has in fact already issued to the Philippines its Safe Travels Stamp, the world’s first global safety and hygiene stamp,” Velasco-Allones emphasized. The Safe Travels Stamp signifies that a country’s safety and hygiene protocols are aligned with WTTC’s Safe Travels Protocols.

Aside from its five-year masterplan, the TPB also carried out numerous events to support the effective implementation of the Tourism Response and Recovery Program. For instance, TPB sent sweeper flights that assisted thousands of stranded tourists affected by the ECQ, as well as provided PPEs and supplements for frontline tourism airport personnel, MalasaKits for transiting tourists at NAIA terminals, surgical masks for DOT ARIU personnel, and essential care kits for returning OFWs at Clark International Airport. It also allocated financial assistance for the RT-PCR tests of tourism workers based in Aklan.

In a bid to provide affordable Real-Time Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) tests for qualified domestic tourists, the DOT and TPB rolled out its RT-PCR Financial Subsidy Programs by inking an agreement with the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH) and the Philippine Children’s Medical Center (PCMC) in December 2020. This partnership subsidizes 50 percent of



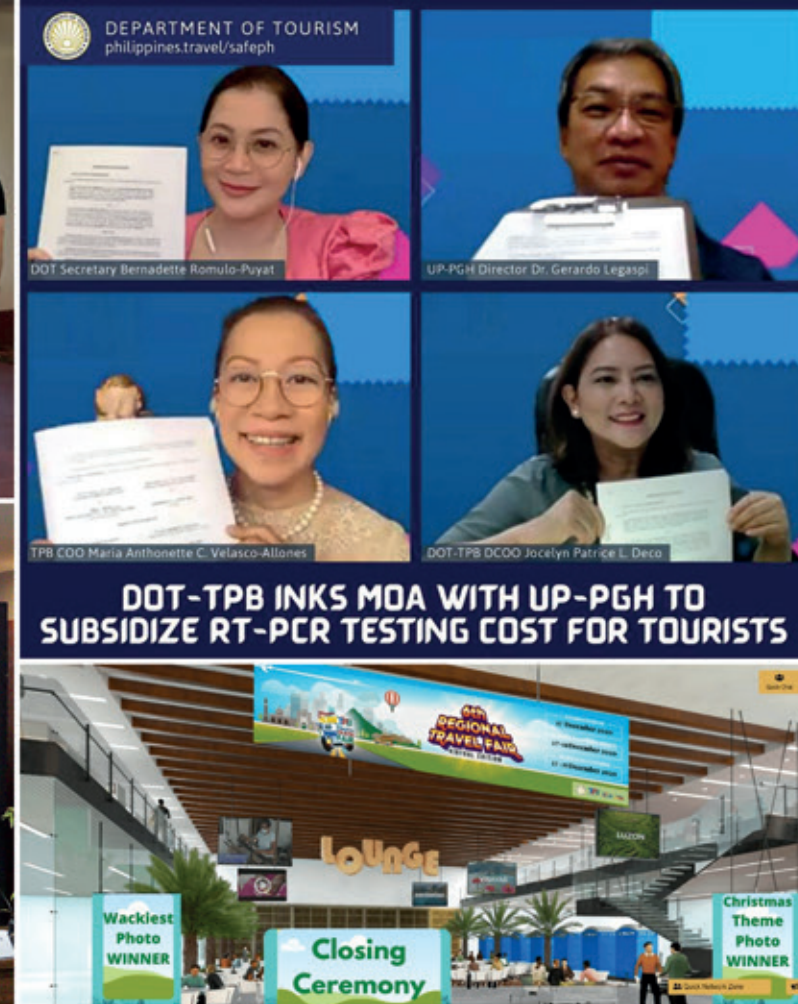
the testing cost to benefit more than 22,000 local tourists to encourage the traveling public to rediscover places that have been declared open and safe by the Inter-Agency Task Force Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF-EID) and local government units.

TPB has also started executing projects that will continue in the coming years such as the New Normal for Safety campaign for travelers, Domestic Tourism Welcome Back Campaign, Motorismo Philippines, and airport rebranding initiatives. Furthermore, a familiarization trip to Bohol was spearheaded in December 2020 for stakeholders to validate and inspect the activities and facilities identified suitable for MICE clients and leisure visitors. As 78 percent of the Bohol economy is based on tourism, this initiative was a big boon to the recovery efforts of the province to restore the jobs of its displaced tourism workers due to the pandemic.

### TECHNOLOGY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

To maximize technology for marketing, promotions, and administrative operations, TPB initiated a Market and Stakeholder Research Study on Travel and Tourism and conducted a digital marketing seminar with localized B2B. It also conducted the 1st Hybrid Philippine Travel Exchange in Panglao Island, Bohol and MICEONLINE 2020, as well as participated in hybrid travel trade, consumer and MICE events to heavily promote the Philippines.

Part of TPB’s plans to promote the gradual reopening of safe domestic tourism is the virtual conduct of its 6th Regional Travel Fair (RTF) held on 17 to 20 December 2020. More than 120 exhibitors from different travel trade sectors participated in this 4-day event which generated 5,606 business leads with 1,404 unique visitors to the platform. It featured webinars, business-to-business sessions and business-to-consumer participations.



With its shift to digital, the event enabled people from home to discover the latest Philippine tourism offerings, and facilitate business negotiations between sellers and buyers.

Meanwhile, to strengthen stakeholder partnership towards cohesive promotions and marketing efforts, TPB conducted the Philippine Tourism Destination Inventory as it continuously consults and collaborates with various tourism associations and LGUs, such as Baguio and Boracay.

In 2020, despite intermittent disruptions due to the pandemic, TPB ensured to maintain efficient, accountable, and transparent administrative and financial processes and systems such as the creation of Task Force Liquidation to drastically reduce previous year fund transfers. The administration also endeavored to fill-up vacant positions to beef up the workforce and provided support mechanisms and alternative work arrangements to ensure personnel safety and COVID-19 mitigation in the workplace.

Furthermore, TPB remains committed to its good governance practices by adhering to the requirements of its oversight offices/committees such as PHILGEPS, ARTA, GPPB for submission of Annual Procurement Plan and Agency Procurement Compliance and Performance Indicator System (APCPI), COA, CSC, and the like.

Lastly, the agency sustained a culture of organizational engagement that fosters effective performance, lifelong learning, and growth through programs on learning and development, employee engagement, service excellence, and corporate social responsibility.

Know more about TPB Philippines and its other programs by visiting its official website at [www.tpb.gov.ph](http://www.tpb.gov.ph).





## MICECONline 2020 successfully pivots to uncharted territory

Responding to the challenge to pivot -- from a trusted and long-running physical event to an uncharted online version -- the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) successfully mounted "MICECONline 2020", the largest gathering of Meetings, Incentive, Travel, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) professionals in the Philippines which provided tourism stakeholders five days of holistic tourism education aimed to retool them in these challenging times.

Held on Oct. 26-30, MICEONline 2020 gathered 1,331 participants from different Philippine destinations, marketing companies, incentive travel planners and organizers, tour operators, hotels/restaurants, airline companies, tourism offices, LGUs, and global media. MICEONline 2020 was also participated by 61 foreign delegates from Australia, China, Germany, India, Japan, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine, UK, and the U.S.

"Proudly, we were able to achieve what we organized MICEONline 2020 for: we indeed 'RENEWed, REBOOTed, and REVITALIZED' to highlight best practices, practical advices, and recovery measures that the MICE industry can adapt especially in these challenging times," said Atty. Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones, Chief Operating Officer of TPB.

For the first time, MICECON was offered free of charge to allow tourism stakeholders from distant locations to network and share their best practices. In the plenary sessions, esteemed

experts from the international and local tourism arena offered new insights and valuable forward-looking concepts from coping with the pandemic, to selling during a global crisis; from gearing up for the new normal to designing hybrid and virtual meetings and finding opportunities in the new ways of mounting exhibitions and a lot more. Participants in the breakout sessions were given a more interactive opportunity to ask speakers and panelists on pressing issues, particularly on how to successfully navigate and thrive despite challenges in the new normal.

At the core of this was the MICE Roadmap that showed targeted focus on each significant sector namely Meeting and Conventions, Incentive Travel, and Exhibitions.

"I have witnessed the wealth of expertise, the depth of commitment, and the breadth of the MICE network in the country and beyond. With all these efforts, we are more than inspired to serve you, our stakeholders and partners, in the best way we can. This is the time to prepare for better years ahead. Let us ramp up our efforts to position the Philippines as a top MICE destination not just in Southeast Asia but the world," said Velasco-Allones with so much optimism.

TPB is looking forward to MICECON 2021 as the Department of Tourism strengthens its efforts to promote domestic travel as more local destinations have begun to open their doors to guests.



## TRAVEL PHILIPPINES GOES ONLINE

The Covid-19 pandemic has deterred the Philippine tourism industry from surpassing its remarkable record in terms of tourism receipts in the previous year. Not only has it forced destinations to close their doors but also displaced millions of workers. But despite the ongoing onslaught of Covid-19, the TPB and the DOT remain hopeful that the industry will bounce back.

One of the efforts that recently came to fruition is Travel Philippines, known as the official progressive web application (PWA) of the TPB and DOT in partnership with HIMO Global Inc. The application, which was launched on 30 October 2020 through an online media press conference headed by DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones, DOT Branding Assistant Secretary Howard Uyking, and HIMO CEO Winston Damarillo, aims to aid potential tourists in their travel journey as they explore the Philippines in the new normal.

Travel Philippines was initially released featuring six destinations that are slowly reopening its doors to domestic tourism such as Boracay,

Baguio, Bohol, Palawan, and Ilocos Norte. It includes up-to-date information on travel requirements, health protocols, and other verified / official information a tourist will find useful prior to traveling.

Metro Manila was also included to promote establishments open for staycations and dining. Other features that were presented during the launch included the trip / itinerary builder, accredited establishments, and an e-vault / storage that users can access to store digital copies of test results and valid IDs that may be required at certain destinations.

Despite having partial information, Travel Philippines was still released to stir up tourist interest in the idea of domestic travel while constantly being updated as more domestic destinations reopen. "The version of the Travel Philippines PWA is just the start of our goal to make it a must have, a one-stop shop for travelers," said Secretary Puyat during the media launch.

More enhancements like the booking platform are expected in the future as Travel Philippines aims to accompany the tourist in his or her travel journey

every step of the way. And to encourage international tourists to visit the Philippines once the country finally reopens, app content will also be translated to languages that cater to TPB's international target markets.

Visit <https://app.philippines.travel/> today!





# TPB WEEKLY MEMBERS' CHAT

As the tourism industry navigates the path to recovery, hopes to sustain partnerships among the tourism stakeholders are revitalized through the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines' Weekly Members' Chat launched on 11 November 2020.

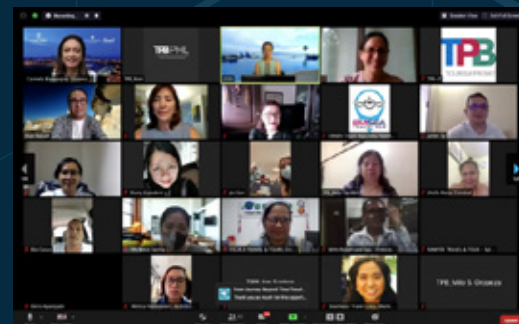
The virtual weekly meetings provide a platform for insights, updates, interactions, and best practice sharing among the agency and its members. Sessions were held via Zoom every Wednesdays for the months of November and December 2020 following a casual presentation of the speakers and a question and answer portion towards the end.

Previous session speakers Catherine Turvill, Fr. Valentino Pinlac, Sharon Perez, Cesar Cruz, Melissa Corilla, Aloysius Mapalo, Christine Urbano-Ibarreta, and Preet Singh represented various sectors of the Philippine tourism industry. Each gave insights on their respective organization's COVID-19 coping mechanisms that range from retooling traditional business operations, adapting digital innovations, implementing and complying with safety protocols, and providing health awareness and skills enhancement programs for clients and staff.

"Our goal is to support you, our valued members, as we go through the challenges of this pandemic together and prepare ourselves for eventual recovery. We want you to share the best things you have done through this pandemic which the others can benefit from," said TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones.

"We hope this series of meetings with tourism stakeholders will allow us to effectively communicate, productively collaborate, and sustainably contribute in building our communities and moving our country forward," Allones added.

The TPB Membership Program is open for membership to Department of Tourism (DOT) accredited establishments and organizations. It aims to provide marketing services and benefits to its members through various activities that promote, advocate, and represent their interests for the benefit and sustainable development of their business and the tourism industry as a whole.



## DOT, TPB Launch Motourismo Philippines Campaign to Rebuild Local Traveling Confidence

*A safe, fun, and practical motorcycle experience is on its way to bring you to the many wonders of the Philippines*



Domestic travelers and motorcycle sports enthusiasts can now revisit and revitalize their travel experience around Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao as the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines officially launched "MOTOURISMO," a Motorcycle Tourism Caravan geared towards rediscovering the country's sight on two wheels on 27 November 2020.

"By initiating this safe yet very thrilling and worthwhile campaign to promote motorcycle tourism through TPB, we want to restore the confidence of the public to travel domestically and help the tourism industry to bounce back from the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis," said Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo – Puyat.

The Secretary added that the DOT and the TPB are tapping motor riders as domestic tourism ambassadors because they are in a position to help promote the Philippines as a country of fun and diverse experience as well as highlighting motorcycles as a secure and viable transportation mode to explore tourist attractions with minimum health and safety protocols in place.

This effort will pave the way for tour operators to create new tour programs to be offered to both domestic and international tourists and help those who lost their jobs jump-start small businesses. It will also generally serve as a platform to disseminate information on safety and health protocols when traveling.

Motourismo is a practical and sustainable way of promoting the country's untapped tourism destinations. It will showcase

interesting culture and heritage sites, shops, restaurants, and other tourism products all over the country for Filipinos to discover.

Thoroughly planned during the past few months, Motourismo came to fruition with TPB's collaboration with DOT, Department of Transportation (DOTr), RidePH, and numerous motorcycle rider clubs and associations in the Philippines.

DOT Secretary Romulo-Puyat and TPB COO Allones were joined by former Senator Joseph Victor G. Ejercito along with several bloggers, influencers, and motorcycle enthusiasts during the virtual launching.

With this government-led initiative, a renewed sense of hope is instilled in the hearts and minds of Filipinos that despite the challenges, the beauty of the Philippine tourist destinations remains worth exploring.

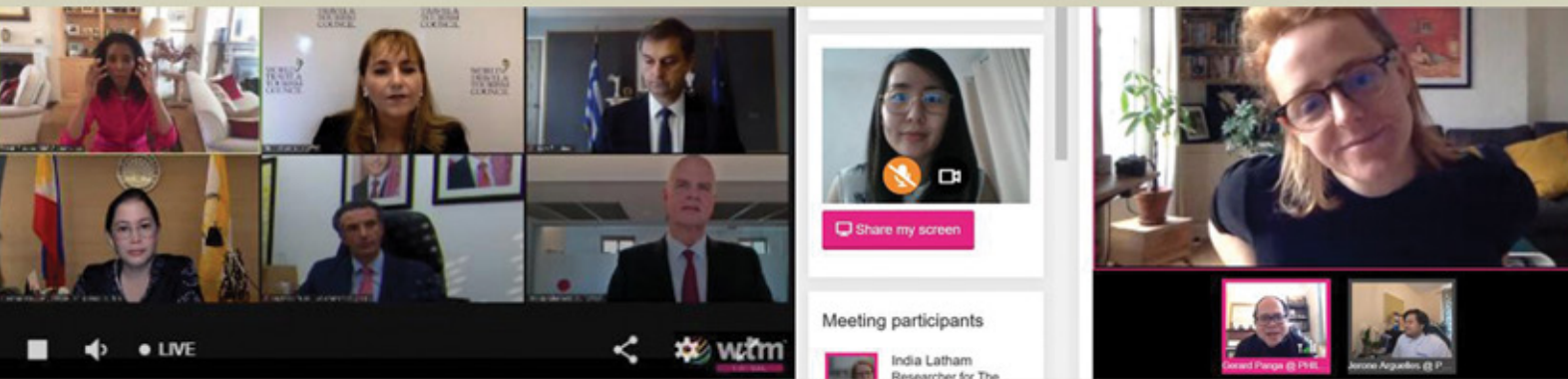


Breakfast Ride attends the online Motourismo Philippines launch in Pampanga



# TPB Philippines joins 1st Virtual World Travel Market 2020

The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines pulled out all the stops in conveying to the world that the Philippine tourism industry is readying to recover and restart as it joined international travel industry players and industry professionals at this year's virtual World Travel Market (WTM).



Set on Nov. 9 – 11, the virtual event sought to help the travel industry rebuild and recover by restoring and developing business connections, growing networks, and solidifying tourism brands.

The Philippines welcomed attendees at Virtual Booth #19 at the WTM, featuring the country's scenic destinations and memorable activities as well as travel agencies, hotels, and resorts from Bohol, Cebu, Boracay, and Palawan.

Part of the Philippine delegation present at the WTM included Travel Experts, Inc., Travelite Travel and Tours, Intas Destinations Mgt., Inc., Annset Holidays, Inc., CTPH Tour, Baron Travel Corporation, Amorita Resort, El Nido Resorts, Bohol Beach Club, Discovery Shores Boracay, Kapwa Travel and Tours, Inc., Blue Horizons Travel and Tours, Inc., Crimson Hotels and Resorts, Belmont Hotel, Rajah Tours Philippines, Sharp Travel Services, and Savoy Hotel.

"Our continuous participation at the World Travel Market is salient in sustaining the country's presence in the international travel and tourism arena and generating interest from international industry partners," said TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones.

In her talk "The Philippine Tourism Pivots into the New Normal" held on Nov. 9, 9:00 am – 9:45 am (UTC+01), Allones highlighted the country's health and safety protocols for travel and the tourism bubbles across the archipelago to showcase safe and fun getaways for everyone to discover.

"We have been working tirelessly with local government units and tourism stakeholders to plot our tourism industry's journey to recovery. We're slowly opening our destinations and we're eager for tourists to come and wake up in the Philippines," the TPB chief added.

Together with the Department of Tourism (DOT), the TPB has identified low-impact areas as "tourism bubbles" to gradually resume safe travel.

The country's northern provinces are at the forefront of this tourism restart initiative with the launch of the Ridge to Reef Corridor Plan. This tourism bubble allows seamless travel within the BLUPISIN region spanning Baguio, La Union, Pangasinan, Ilocos Sur, and Ilocos Norte.

El Nido in Palawan and the island-paradise of Boracay, which are among the world's best beaches and famous for their sugar-fine sand beaches and stunning vistas, have reopened their doors to tourists. Other destinations such as Coron in Palawan and Panglao in Bohol also welcomed tourism once again.

To ensure safety, guidelines across tourist sites for tourism-related activities have been set in place. These include sanitation and disinfection processes, health screenings, limits on visitor capacity and event attendance, the wearing of masks, and physical distancing.

The TPB also recently launched the Travel Philippines progressive web application, the country's official travel companion. The easy-to-use platform enables users to access latest travel advisories and safety guidelines of various destinations, create itineraries for future trips, find up-to-date information on tourist attractions, and securely store digital copies of their travel documents.

"Today, we turn to innovation to restart tourism in the Philippines. It is our hope to enhance the experience of our tourists once our borders reopen and they come, wake up and discover the Philippines in the new normal," said Allones.



## TPB, DOT-China hold 1st PHL Online Business Mission

*The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines partners with the Department of Tourism (DOT)-China to fortify travel trade between both countries as the pandemic continues.*

The Tourism Promotions Board (Philippines), together with the Philippine Department of Tourism offices in China, has mounted the country's 1st Online Business Mission from December 14, 2020 to February 14, 2021 with the aim to bridge the gap between the Chinese and Philippine travel trade sectors in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The business mission kicked off with a series of one-on-one business meetings between the countries' travel trade sectors last December 14 to 16 and was highlighted with a presentation of Philippine destinations that recently reopened to the public, having passed the rigid healthy and safety standards imposed by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF).

200 buyers composed of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), MICE operators, travel agencies, wholesalers, and charter and cruise operators are expected to join this significant convention. A minimum of 645 guaranteed virtual meetings will be conducted during the scheduled business-to-

business meetings, including 15 appointments each with the 45 confirmed sellers. This number is expected to increase, depending on the buyers and sellers' agreement during the pre-appointment period.

Sellers and buyers can meet and conduct business in a virtual booth which will be open for two months. Special events such as raffle promotions will also be held to encourage buyers to keep on visiting the online platform. Automatic translation for both Mandarin and English languages will be made available through chat messaging during the actual meeting.

Through this Online Business Mission, DOT Philippines and China, along with TPB and 43 members of the Philippine private sector, expect a progressive recovery of the tourism industries of both countries.

Know more about TPB Philippines and its other initiatives by visiting its official website: [www.tpb.gov.ph](http://www.tpb.gov.ph).



## PDOT OSAKA, TPB JUMP-START PHILIPPINE DIVE

The Philippine Department of Tourism Osaka (PDOT Osaka) and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, together with Ocean View Dive Tour Company, held the Philippine Dive Night last October 10, 2020, at Hotel Monterey in Fukuoka City, Japan. The on-site promotional event was attended by more than 50 participants representing tour dive companies, travel agencies, corporate officials, and multimedia practitioners.

One of the highlights of the event was the onsite presentation of PDOT Osaka Marketing Specialist Koji Takehara followed by a virtual presentation of Bohol Beach Club General Manager Allan Santos on the developments of scuba diving in the Philippines.

PDOT Osaka Tourism Attaché Leona Nepomuceno, during her opening remarks, pointed out that the current situation has helped Philippine marine eco-system to rest and heal itself. She also assured the public of the optimum safety of travelers to the Philippines with health and safety protocols in place. Moreover, Nepomuceno expressed her gratitude to those who

voted for the Philippines as the Best Overseas Diving Area at the Marine Diving Awards 2020.

Ocean View Dive Tour Company COO and President Mitsugo Ohori committed to support Philippine scuba diving once travel restriction to the Philippines is lifted by the Japanese government. He further said that his company has initiated the Philippine English as Second Language (ESL) Program dovetailed with their dive tour programs for the Japanese Joshi tabi market.

The joint promotional activity aimed to strengthen the position of the Philippines as a preferred dive destination for Japanese accredited divers and underwater enthusiasts and to reinforce existing business and goodwill between PDOT Osaka and corporate decision-makers and influencers.

Onsite events are currently held all over Japan despite the pandemic. Fukuoka City, under the Fukuoka prefecture, boasts of the least number of COVID-19 infections in Japan.



## TPB and Philippine MICE Stakeholders Participate in Virtual International MICE Events: IT&CMA and IBTM Americas

Together with private sector partners, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines participated in the Incentive Travel and Conventions, Meetings Asia (IT&CMA) on 16-20 November 2020 and the Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings Expo (IBTM) Americas One-2-One Digital Appointments on 9-13 and 17-20 November 2020 as part of its ongoing efforts to promote the Philippines as a preferred tourism and Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conventions, Exhibitions (MICE) destination.

This activity is also in line with TPB's commitment to continuously provide private stakeholders a platform that will engage international Buyers and secure future MICE Business for the Philippines.

Established in 1993 and organized by TTG Asia Media, IT&CMA, an event co-located

with Corporate Travel World (CTW) Asia Pacific, is the largest MICE Event focusing on the Asia Pacific as a MICE Destination. For its 28th edition, IT&CMA was held in a purely virtual arena. This five-day virtual Business-to-Business (B2B) event attracted over 800 delegates from all over the world, including 272 exhibitors from 21 countries.

IBTM Americas, on the other hand, is organized by Reed Exhibitions, and it connects the meetings industry across North America and Latin America through the combination of its IBTM America and IBTM Latin America shows. This MICE show attracts global Buyers, with a focus on the Americas market. With the postponement of IBTM Americas to 2021, Reed Exhibitions is holding a series of mini-B2B shows entitled IBTM Americas One-2-One Digital Appointments as a lead-up to the 2021 show in August. The

first two sessions of the One-2-One Digital Appointments were held on 9-13 and 17-20 November, with a third session slated on 25 – 29 January 2021.

The TPB and its private sector co-exhibitors in the two virtual shows were able to secure inquiries for MICE events in the Philippines for the second half of 2021 onwards.

IBTM Americas and IT&CMA are expected to welcome on-site delegates and buyers on 18-19 August 2021 in Mexico City (IBTM Americas) and 28-30 September 2021 in Bangkok, Thailand (IT&CMA).

For more updates about TPB Philippines and its MICE events, visit its official website: [www.tpb.gov.ph](http://www.tpb.gov.ph).



## TPB, PHILTOA launch Ultimate Bucket List Adventure travel incentive program

The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, in partnership with Philippine Tour Operators Association, Inc. (PHILTOA), launched the Ultimate Bucket List Adventure travel incentive program in its bid to restart domestic tourism safely and sustainably last 16 October 2020 at the First Pacific Leadership Academy in Antipolo, Rizal during PHILTOA's 5th General Membership Meeting.

TPB, the marketing arm of the Department of Tourism (DOT), and PHILTOA, the largest association of registered inbound and domestic tour operators in the country with more than 500 members, have joined forces to encourage domestic tourists to travel within the country by acquiring specific tour packages from participating DOT-accredited tour operators/ agents. Tours are arranged in circuit destinations in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, and successful entries will receive an individual incentive tour package voucher from TPB.



COO Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones

"The Ultimate Bucket List Adventure is part of TPB's consumer engagement incentive program," said TPB COO Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones. "We want to open and promote our destinations and jump-start tourism recovery with value for money packages, at the same time ensuring compliance with New Normal safety and health protocols in all tourism industries. In fact, we are elated to announce that recently, the Philippines received the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Safe Travel stamp, in recognition of the country's adoption of global health and hygiene protocols."



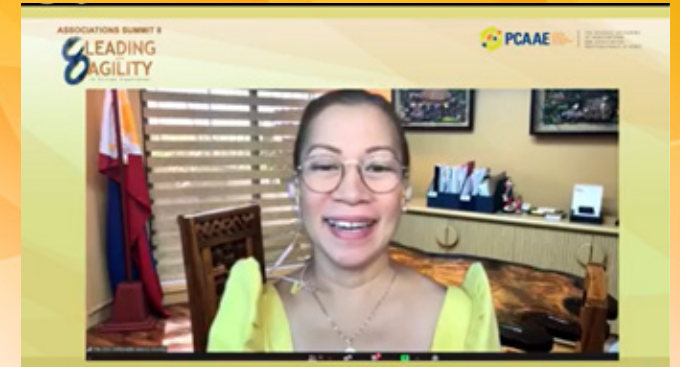
Among the identified travel circuits in the Philippines are the "Ridge to Reef" Corridor Plan in Northern Philippines, which enables seamless travel within the BLUPISIN spanning Baguio City, La Union, Pangasinan, Ilocos Sur, and Ilocos Norte; Boracay Island in Aklan; El Nido in Palawan; and Panglao, Bohol.

These travel circuits will allow residents to tour exclusively within these areas in the initial phase. Strict inter-provincial border controls are in place to protect tourists and the communities, and digital monitoring is employed to keep track of visitor activities.

Furthermore, as a model in adoption of technology and contactless transactions, the TPB funded Baguio City's Visitor Information and Travel Assistance (V.I.S.I.T.A.), a multi-platform digital monitoring application to help with border control and contact tracing.

"We are hoping to boost the traveling public's participation via this incentive program," said PHILTOA President Cesar Cruz. "As tourism enterprises, we are happy to go back to our main objective: to create and operate tour packages and drive the confidence of the consumer to travel again."

For the Ultimate Bucket List Adventure, domestic tourists need to register and book their itinerary through a PHILTOA member operator or agency. Then they must travel to complete the bucket list and post their photos on social media with a caption on why "it's more fun in the Philippines." Entries will be submitted to TPB for validation and proof of travel. Completing five (5) destinations will then qualify the tourist to receive an all-expense paid Domestic Travel Voucher to their destination of choice. "Travel validity is until December 2021 and will be open dated and rebookable."



## TPB ESPOUSES AGILE LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CRISIS AT EXECUTIVES SUMMIT

*Find out how TPB leads with agility by implementing the three strategies it has generated to help boost the country's tourism industry.*

Agile leadership in times of pandemic will see industries through.

This was emphasized by Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones in her talk at the 8th Associations Summit, spearheaded by the Philippine Council of Associations and Association Executives (PCAAE) last November 25-26, 2020. The summit gathered association leaders and executives to discuss topics about association management and governance.

Velasco-Allones pointed out how the current global situation has pushed them at the TPB to innovate and adapt agile methods to develop new products, rebrand services, and maintain effective and functional operations in the digital platform.

"Agile leadership underscores the creation of the right environment for self-managing teams for higher productivity—one where teams can continuously collaborate with and learn from each other, where they are focused on quality learning, emphasizing the culture of shared ownership, growth mindset, positive feedback, and working towards long-term goals," Velasco-Allones explained.

Illustrating agile leadership in the TPB context, Velasco-Allones outlined the three strategies TPB has adapted to assist clients and the private sector achieve growth in the tourism industry. The first one, **Partnerships as Pathways**, cultivates strong collaborations with the national government agencies, local government units, and the private sector to pursue joint promotions and marketing activities.

TPB also implemented the **SMARTourism Program** to strengthen its digital presence. It launched a progressive web application called Travel Philippines as an innovative guide for domestic travelers to have a safe, informative, and memorable travel experience. TPB has also instituted several programs like Motourismo and Bounce Back Philippine Tourism under its **Safe Bangon Turismo campaign** to ensure secure resumption of the local tourism.

"In May, we found out that despite the pandemic, despite the lack of vaccine for now, 77 percent of Filipinos said they are still willing to travel domestically, while 96 percent said they would really want to have that sense of security in terms of their health and safety," Velasco-Allones explained.

Since 2013, TPB has been supporting this annual PCAA flagship program to fortify networks and maintain relationships with various Philippine professional associations. Other speakers who shared their expertise about leadership agility included Futurist Gihan Perera, Associations Forum CEO John Peacock, The Solution CEO Dot Miller, and The Australasian Society of Association Executives CEO Toni Brearley. The summit also paved the way for the Ang Susi Awards Presentation which recognized associations for their outstanding achievements and contribution to the economic development.

Know more about TPB Philippines by visiting its official website: [www.tpb.gov.ph](http://www.tpb.gov.ph).





The Philippines' dive sites and Intramuros once again bagged accolades at the 27th World Travel Awards. The award-giving body recognized the Philippines as the World's Leading Dive Destination and Intramuros as the World's Leading Tourist Attraction in 2020.

"We are incredibly grateful for the recognitions given to the Philippines' magnificent dive sites and the beautifully-restored heritage site of Intramuros at the 27th World Travel Awards. We will continue to promote sustainable, inclusive, and world-class tourism, especially now as we slowly reopen our attractions to more domestic tourists," said Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat.

It is the Philippines' second time to win the World's Leading Dive Destination, besting eight (8) different dive destinations such as Azores Islands, Bora Bora, French Polynesia, Cayman Islands, Fiji, Galapagos Islands, Great Barrier Reef, Australia, Maldives, and Mexico.

Meanwhile, it is Intramuros's first time to win World's Leading Tourist Attraction, beating fifteen (15) different attractions such as Acropolis of Greece, Burj Khalifa of Dubai, the Grand Canyon National Park of USA, Mount Kilimanjaro of Tanzania, and Taj Mahal of India, among others.

DOT has also recognized dive tourism as one of the key areas for positive industry growth, including increased visitor count, extended length of stay, and higher tourism revenue.

## DOT CELEBRATES PH'S VICTORY AS WORLD'S LEADING DIVE DESTINATION AND TOURIST ATTRACTION FOR INTRAMUROS IN 2020

The Philippines is home to the highest concentration of coral reef life and a variety of marine species in its world-renowned dive sites such as the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in Palawan, Apo Reef Natural Park in Mindoro, and Apo Island in Dumaguete, among others.

Batangas recently reopened its dive sites establishments in Anilao for Recreational Diving, subject to a negative COVID test result before travel and other minimum health and safety standards.

In Manila, on the other hand, Intramuros Administration (IA) restores the walled city with extensive renovations such as bright capiz lamps installed in monuments and trees, colorful murals, and new sites, such as the dungeon and cleaned-up and fortified military structures, as a tribute to the country's historic Hispanic period. Through its programs, IA ensures Intramuros remains an iconic tourism site that honors the Philippines' glorious past.

Founded in 1993, the World Travel Awards has been recognizing brands and organizations worldwide from the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries through its annual Grand Tour, a series of six regional gala ceremonies held in each continent. Each year is capped off with a Grand Final Gala.

For more information about the Philippines, visit [app.philippines.travel](http://app.philippines.travel).

Source: Philippine Department of Tourism



## DOT LAUNCHES **HAVE A SAFE TRIP, PINAS** TO PROMOTE SAFE TRAVELS AND SUPPORT TOURISM WORKERS

Now that the Philippines has reopened several tourist destinations after many months of closure, it's time to show the country how to smile again. The DOT's latest video, following the "Noypi" tribute to medical frontliners, brings us back to familiar, yet slightly different territory: tourism in the new normal.

Scenes from a typical out-of-town trip—partaking in tourism activities, lounging by scenic spots, al fresco dining in the moonlight—are interjected with images that we have only this year become accustomed to, like face masks and shields, gloved hospitality staff, and the constant reminders to keep physical distancing.

Singer Armi Millare's rendition of "You," a song popularized by Basil Valdez forty years ago but forever timeless in the romantic Pinoy's heart, accompanies the narrative of a young man and woman seemingly meeting for the first time as they arrive on an island.

More than a campaign to remind tourists to adhere to new normal guidelines, "Have a Safe Trip, Pinas" shows that we can still experience magic when traveling amidst the pandemic. The strict health and safety protocols implemented by hotels, transport services, and other tourism operations are there to

keep guests safe and observing them allows us to appreciate the special moments without the worry.

The video also highlights the community benefits of tourism. Behind the happy memories that visitors make and the souvenirs they take home are the hardworking people who make everything happen. The final scenes show real people from Boracay whose jobs and livelihoods were restored when travel commenced. They truly are pleased to welcome you back, because no mask can hide a smile from the heart.

Visit [philippines.travel/safetrip](http://philippines.travel/safetrip) for information on reopened destinations and their respective health and safety protocols. You may also download the DOT's official app at [app.philippines.travel](http://app.philippines.travel)





# NEW NORMAL PROTOCOLS FOR ISLAND AND BEACH DESTINATIONS

## PRE-ENTRY POLICY

- Prior booking is required for all guests who intend to stay at least one night in the Island or Beach Destination
- A directory of DOT-Accredited Accommodation Establishments shall be available at the port for reference
- No walk-in guests shall be allowed
- Accommodation Establishments shall utilize online/contactless reservation and payment methods
- Mandatory screening must be done at the Port of Entry



Body temperature checking



Contactless Health Declaration Form



- Guests shall be provided with appropriate information on the rules and regulations enforced in the Island or Beach Destination

## GUEST HANDLING POLICY

### Safety Protocols upon Arrival in the Island



Names of guests with confirmed bookings shall be available at the Ports of Entry



Guests without confirmed bookings but are part of a day tour or can present an outbound or return ticket shall be allowed entry



"No face mask, no entry" policy



Proper physical distancing shall be strictly observed



Mabuhay Gesture and other forms of contactless greeting are highly encouraged

### Safety Protocols for Personnel

- All personnel shall use the proper PPE such as face masks and/or face shields, and shall observe physical distancing at all times. Gloves shall be used for assistance requiring physical contact
- Frequent hand washing and respiratory etiquette must be strictly observed



Strategic entry and exit points may be provided to properly monitor the guests entering and exiting the Island Destination



## PUBLIC AREAS

### Beach

- Reminder signs shall be installed in strategic locations
- Beach marshals may be designated to ensure that guests observe physical distancing. Use of floor markers, flags, or other devices is highly encouraged
- Lifeguards shall be available during swimming hours
- Concessions, shops, peddlers, ambulant vendors, and food vending are strictly prohibited. Chairs, canopies, grills and other temporary ancillary structures are not allowed
- Mass gathering, any group events, and other beach activities shall comply with national and local government unit (LGU) issuances
- Sanitation and hand washing stations must be installed in strategic locations
- Frequent sanitation and disinfection of high-touch surfaces must be conducted
- Trash bins must be available and accessible. A separate trash bin for used PPE must be provided



### Public Restrooms

- Shall adhere to the ASEAN Public Toilet Standards
- Shall be operational at all times, and must be cleaned and sanitized every after 2 hours or as necessary
- Clean water, hand soaps, 70% solution alcohol or alcohol-based sanitizers, and tissue paper or paper towels must be available
- Regular maintenance for handwashing and toilet flushing facilities must be conducted
- Cleaning and sanitation of shower and showerheads must be done regularly
- Trash bins must be cleaned and sanitized every after disposal of trash



### Recreational Activities

- Non-contact sports and exercise are allowed provided that Minimum Public Health Standards are observed
- Biking may be allowed if bike paths are available



## Emergency Response-Related Policies



An Emergency Preparedness Plan shall be available



There must be access to at least one medical facility in the island for emergency cases



A well-trained and equipped emergency response team shall be available to provide emergency assistance whenever necessary



A holding area shall be designated for the symptomatic guests while waiting for trained personnel to transport him/her to the nearest medical facility



Constant coordination between the emergency response team and Barangay Health Emergency Response Team is mandatory in handling health emergency incidents



All related issuances from the Department of Health (DOH) on the proper handling of patient and the implementation of Minimum Public Health Standards shall be observed at all times



# Ridge and Reef travel corridor expands to Ilocos Sur

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat was among the first guests of Ilocos Sur as the province reopened to visitors, this time including tourists from Metro Manila.

The tourism chief was the guest of honor in a ceremony that officially launched the expanded Ridge and Reef Travel Corridor on Friday, November 20. Also in attendance were Ilocos Sur Governor Ryan Luis Singson, Vigan City Mayor Juan Carlo Medina, and other provincial leaders.

"We are making another big leap forward with the reopening of Ilocos Sur to tourists from the rest of Luzon. Staying true to our strategy of "slowly but surely" reopening our destinations, we have taken careful steps to ensure that the public's health and safety continues to be the priority in this great undertaking," said Secretary Puyat.

The Tourism chief expressed support for the strengthening of Ilocos Sur's capacity building programs for both the local government unit and the tourism stakeholders, and for redefining the province's old and new tourism products geared towards culture and heritage.

"As the Covid-19 pandemic impacted our various regions in different ways, there is no 'one size fits all' solution to how we could restart tourism. We have to find a balance between our mandate to develop tourism and promote travel, and to safeguard the health and wellbeing of tourists, stakeholders, tourism workers, and local communities. The opening of Ilocos Sur and its various destinations conforms with this balance, as exemplified by the

Local Government's issuance of an Executive Order on health and safety guidelines," added the tourism chief.

"We look forward to working closely with Governor Ryan Singson and the Provincial Government in further developing tourism, recalibrating their product portfolio and building the capability of our stakeholders and frontliners as well," Secretary Puyat further said.

A maximum of 50 visitors per day will be allowed entry to ensure effective crowd control and the strict implementation of the health and safety protocols that begin at the borders of the province in the municipalities of Tagudin and Sinait, where the triage testing centers are located.

Upon arrival at the border, tourists must present the following: a negative result for RT-PCR test taken within 48 hours before travel; a digital or printed SafePass QR Code accessible via <https://tinyurl.com/SafePassSMS>; a confirmed itinerary from a DOT-accredited tour and travel agency; a confirmed booking from a DOT-accredited accommodation establishment (AE); a confirmed booking from a DOT-accredited tourist transport if not using a private vehicle; and a government-issued ID. Upon arrival, the guest will be required to take an antigen test at the Ilocos Sur Tourist Triage and Assistance Center, valid for a three-day itinerary.

Tourists who intend to stay more than three days must take another antigen test on their fourth day, valid for another three-day stay.

"These will be followed stringently, but I assure everyone that these travel

requisites will be worth the beauty and wonders when you visit Ilocos Sur. The province abounds with multiple attractions sure to captivate the imagination of all types of travelers, from history buffs to foodies, from adventure seekers to nature enthusiasts, from art aficionados to beach lovers," enthused Puyat.

Tourists shall use only identified DOT-accredited stopovers such as Marsha's Delicacies in Bantay, JV & LV Pasalubong Center in Candon, Petron in Sto. Domingo, San Esteban Tourism and Youth Development Center in San Esteban for meals and personal necessities.

At least 18 tourist destinations are now allowed to reopen in the province. These include the Heritage Village in Calle Crisologo, Ilocos Sur Adventure Zone, Caniaw Heritage and Forest Park, Nuestra Senora De La Asuncion Church, Pinsal Falls, Moro Watch Tower, Hidden Garden, Baluarte Zoo, and the Ilocos Sur Dancing Fountain. Ten diving spots in different barangays will likewise be opened to the public.

As of November 19, the DOT-Region 1 has given 134 accommodation establishments in Ilocos Sur the green light to operate: 39 were issued Certificates of Authority to Operate (CAO) while 95 were granted Provisional Certificates of Authority to Operate (PCAO).

For travel updates to Ilocos Sur, kindly visit the Sure Ilocos Sur Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/SureIlocosSur/>

Source: Philippine Department of Tourism



## STORY OF STRENGTH, RESILIENCE AND KINDNESS IN THE DIVING COMMUNITY DURING A PANDEMIC



Imagine this. During the nationwide lockdown, you get stuck on an island for 7 months with your granny. Then the online travel platform that recruited you just a few months ago shuts down. The job and consultancy projects you were expecting never came through this season. Your beloved grandmother is just released from the ICU and on top of all this, you are struggling to survive a pandemic.

Meet Kate. A thirty-five-year-old graduate of Tourism Management at the De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, former English and Tourism College Faculty, and founder of GustoAvventura who came to Puerto Galera on March 14 and was forced to face these circumstances at the start of 2020. Kate is one of more than five million professionals that have lost their jobs because of COVID-19. Like many, she is one of those coping with uncertainty. Yet despite all odds stacked against her, Kate has learned to overcome each obstacle with some newfound friends and her incredible persistence, grit, faith, and optimism.

During her stay, Pedro - the president of the Scuba Diving Association and PADI Course Director - also introduced Kate to the world of scuba diving with a PADI Open Water Course.

Kate decided to further pursue this new zeal with Alain and

Calou Carolus - a French couple who owns Blue Lagoon Dive Resort that offered her a free Garden Bungalow and SDI scholarship.

Right after the storm Quinta and hearing Rolly is stronger, Kate decided to go back to Manila by faith. The local Mayor Hon. Rocky Ilagan in partnership with Mr. Glendon Persia, Puerto Galera Penguins Water Transport Inc. Vessel HAGIBIS, blessed Kate and her granny with a private water taxi ride.

Then when they got to Berberabe Port, Batangas her "kinakapatids" the Espino brothers, Husky Breeders came to their rescue to pick them up and provided a home for her and her Nana at one of their condos at Alabang.

Kate's remarkable story showcases the power of kindness and the attitude of gratitude. If you want your establishment to be featured in the upcoming travel channel please email at [gustoavventura@gmail.com](mailto:gustoavventura@gmail.com). Or follow her work at [gustoavventuraph](https://www.instagram.com/gustoavventuraph) across Facebook/IG/ YouTube.

Get the full story at [@philippinedives.com](https://philippinedives.com) "Surviving and Scuba Diving in the Middle of the Pandemic"





# BAGUIO IN THE NEW NORMAL

Domestic travel is slowly gaining momentum as restrictions for leisure travel continue to be lifted for several areas in the country. With everyone's safety in mind, health protocols are strictly implemented to continue to contain and mitigate the COVID-19 virus. Let's take a look at one of the pioneer destinations welcoming tourists in the New Normal.

Designated as a UNESCO Creative City for Crafts and Folk Art, Baguio focused on promoting creative crawls and four circuits showcasing the city's artistic and cultural heritage sites to spur economic activity and help its creative community.

Make sure to check out these creative attractions when you visit Baguio City:



## BenCab Museum

Appreciate the works of National Artist for Visual Arts Benedicto Cabrera as well as works of other Filipino contemporary artists at the BenCab Museum on Asin Road at Tuba, Benguet.



## Ili-Likha Artists Village

The brainchild of film director Kidlat Tahimik, Ili-Likha Artists Village showcases artistic works and serves as an inspiration hub for local and emerging artists.



## Mandeko Kito! Artisanal Market

Located at Sunshine Park, Mandeko Kito! is an arts and crafts fair serving as a venue to showcase works and products of local artists and artisans.



## Museo Kordilyera

Learn more about the indigenous tribes of the Cordilleras at Museo Kordilyera, the first ethnographic museum dedicated to preserve and enrich Cordillera's culture and heritage.

© Marc Go

22 | December 2020



© Francisco Guerrero

## WTCMM PREPARES FOR RESUMPTION OF BUSINESS

After six (6) months of operating as a temporary quarantine facility for the National Government, World Trade Center Metro Manila (WTCMM) is gearing up to resume business anytime Metro Manila transitions to Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ).

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) will head and supervise a series of activities prior to the turn-over of the WTCMM Building to ensure a safe and fit-for-occupancy status. For the entire October 2020, the WTCMM building underwent aeration, thorough decontamination and disinfection of all indoor and outdoor areas, including aircon ducts and filters, disinfection of walls and surfaces, siphoning of septic tanks, hauling out of infectious wastes, among others. Pull out of all installations, build-down, and repairs of damages to restore the WTCMM building to its original state has been completed within the month.

WTCMM will launch BE (Business Events) Safe, a safety program that will ascribe to the new protocols and guidelines released by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), as per DOT MC# 2020-006. BE Safe aims to communicate WTCMM's implementations on how it will operationally achieve a safe business events venue amidst Covid-19. As Pamela D. Pascual, President and Chief Executive Officer, shares, "it was a great honor to be given an opportunity to make a difference and work alongside government and like-minded private sector companies to help augment the gap in health care facilities in the country. As a company, we were very much affected by this pandemic and so we look forward to the opportunity to resume business so we could continue to look after the welfare of our employees, serve our industry stakeholders and consequently help revive economic activity."

From April to September 2020, the WTC Heal As One Center (WHAOC), one of the first facilities hand-picked by government, served a total of nearly 3,700 combined OFW returnees and mild asymptomatic patients, and some 160 health workers and volunteers. The AFP Medical Team handled the medical and operational needs of the center that ensured the safety of the patients and health workers alike. WHAOC achieved an impressive recovery rate of 97%.



The contiguous exhibition hall and premises lent ease in housing a 502-bed capacity healthcare facility, sleeping quarters for healthcare workers and volunteers, a triage center, x-ray room, doctors' clinics, offices, nursing room, shower stalls and additional toilets. The ICCP Group through its affiliate Manila Exposition Complex, Inc. (MEC), the owner of WTCMM, together with the Ayala Group of Companies, converted the building into a most convenient hospital facility allowing generous spacing indoors and outdoors, equipped with exhaust systems and fresh air intake ducts that provided negative pressure and acceptable indoor air quality inside the temporary quarantine facility.

The WHAOC was made possible with the support of generous private companies. Meralco for electricity, Maynilad for water, and Globe and Smart for wifi connectivity. Other companies that provided various safety paraphernalia were San Miguel Corporation, Kimberly Clark, Bellevue Hotel, Dusit Thani Manila, Hotel 101, Solaire Resort and Casino, Booths N More, MAI Events, Pro-BeatBox Entertainment Concept, Etiqua and Red and Blue Emergency Services. Donations also poured in from organizations such as Mary Knoll-Meriam College and UP Sigma Delta Phi Alumni Assn. Packed meals and bottled drinks were donated by Century Pacific Food Inc., Coca-Cola, Dunkin' Donuts, Gardenia, Jollibee Roxas Strip branch and Pepsi Cola.

Government agencies who collaborated in this project were the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Information Communication and Technology (DICT), Department of National Defense (DND), Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and PAGCOR.

Source: Philippine Department of Tourism

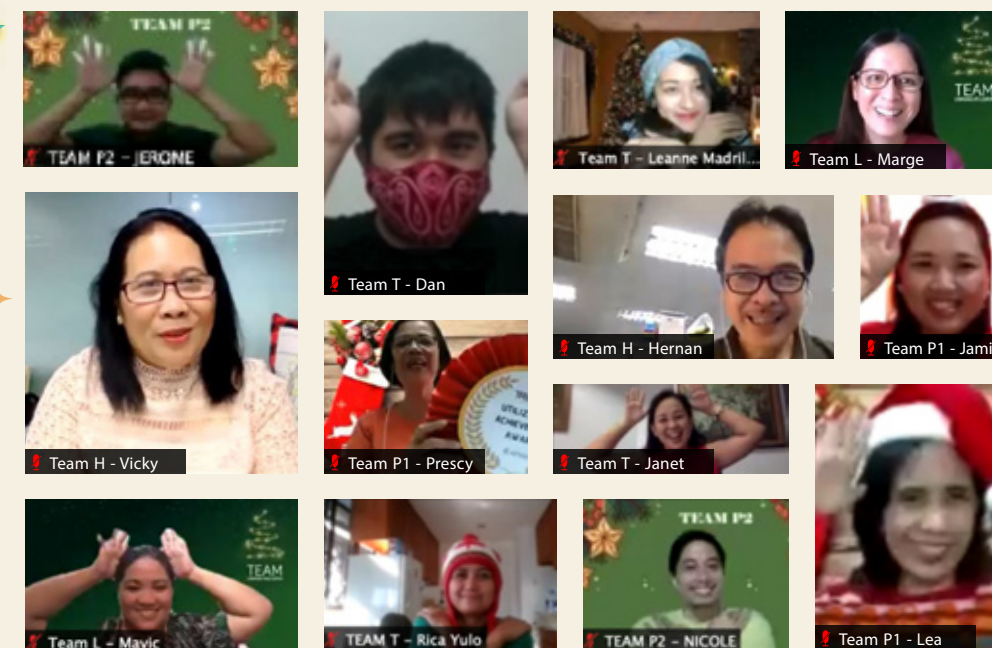


## The Tradition Continues as Filipinos celebrate Christmas in a Pandemic.

The longest and most awaited Philippine celebration is not the same this year as the country battles with Covid-19. The usual festivity that brings families together may not be the same anymore but that doesn't mean that we have to hold back the usual customs such as lighting up a Christmas tree, hanging a parol, and so much more. Here are some photos to remind you how we can still celebrate Christmas during a pandemic.



## TPB HOLDS VIRTUAL YEAR-END EVENT FOR EMPLOYEES



The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) brought yuletide cheers to the TPB employees with its first-ever Virtual Year-End Event celebration held via ZOOM last 11 December 2020 in place of the agency's annual physical celebration.

As part of TPB's Employee Engagement initiative, the Year-End Celebration program included an interactive Virtual Group Activity entitled "Quest for Joy" which was facilitated by iLEAP Consulting. The Quest for Joy aimed to foster camaraderie amongst the TPB personnel despite the physical limitations of the current alternative work arrangements. The Amazing Race-inspired activity took the TPB employees to six local destinations namely Baguio, Pampanga, Manila, Bohol, Cagayan de Oro and Iloilo to experience their holiday traditions and help them realize that joy can still be found despite the pandemic.

TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones wished that the TPB employees not only find joy but also the courage to endure the current challenges posed by being in public service. She also emphasized on valuing charity by sharing one's blessings with others.

The event also included a tribute to celebrate the long-standing careers of TPB retirees. Ms. Victoria Supillo and Mr. Hernan Narvadez were presented with Plaques of Appreciation for the years of service they rendered for the country and the agency.

The program ended on a sweet note with the TPB personnel receiving packed lunch and grocery gift baskets. Home items and gadgets, including a new laptop as grand prize, were also raffled to help employees in their work from home setup.



# Hoping for a Brighter 2021

2021 is drawing close and we are excited to leave this roller coaster year with the hope of a brighter new beginning. We have asked some of our tourism frontliners about their high hopes for 2021:

“

Greetings!

The novel coronavirus pandemic is one of the most dire threats the world has ever faced. And yet, amidst the confusion and anxiety, there are ever stronger signs of hope and solidarity, a sense of, and desire for, togetherness. It is this spirit of global togetherness that give us hope. In this time of crisis, we are all neighbors in the world, and success will only be achieved when all people, in all country, are protected.

Let us continue to be vigilant and follow all health protocols, to keep us safe. Be positive amidst this crisis and believe that there is light at the end of the tunnel. As we continue to find comfort in the stories of hope and solidarity. And continue to see the value in an optimistic, encouraging lessons that are emerging for our post covid world.

God Bless Us All!

**Mary Grace L. Melendres**  
President, Cebu Association of Tour Guides, Inc. (CATG)

“

As we all know, travel and hospitality industries were among the sectors that was severely hit by COVID-19 pandemic, to be honest it's really hard to predict what will happen next year, but based on the news about the vaccines gives me hope that we will see at least 50 percent revival. I pray that year 2021 will be our bounce back.

**Bunny Mae Q. Lamsin**  
Front Office Associate, The Linden Suites

“

This year was really tough for the tourism industry. Since I am with the transportation sector, it's very unusual and saddening for me to see the drastic change of movement of people to places. I know our industry is just taking a break, let's still keep our hopes up. Sooner or later, long lines in queue will greet us in the airport, hotels are all fully booked and our tourist spots are opened once again and enjoyed not just by tourists but also us, the locals. I hope and pray that next year will be a big comeback for us. Tourism industry is so ready for you, 2021!

**Kristine Bitangcol**  
Flight Attendant, Philippine Airlines

## TPB EXTENDS HELPING HAND TO BICOL AND CAGAYAN VALLEY REGIONS

2020's strongest typhoon, known locally as Rolly, battered the Philippines in November, with Catanduanes and Albay provinces bearing the brunt of its strength as it crossed the archipelago. On its wake were storms Siony and Tonyo, with another typhoon named Ulysses bringing the worst flooding in Cagayan Valley.

In response to the thousands of families displaced, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines mounted a disaster relief drive to support the families in need of assistance in Albay, Camarines Sur, and Catanduanes in Bicol and Baggao and Enrile towns of the Cagayan Valley.



TPB employees volunteered to repack food packs in luggage cube organizers and hygiene kits packaged in durable waterproof drawstring bags. Each food pack contained nine (9) canned goods, half a kilo of sugar, biscuits, sachets of coffee, milk and chocolate drink, instant noodles, a bath towel for Cagayan residents and a liter of bottled water for Bicol recipients. Meanwhile, hygiene kits included a 500 ml alcohol, sachets of shampoos, bath soaps, deodorant sachets for men and women, a pack of feminine pads, and a bar of detergent soap.

TPB's corporate social responsibility drive in Bicol and Cagayan Valley yielded a total of 1,700 relief goods as assistance to the disaster-affected communities in the regions. Shipment of the 700 packs from Manila to Bicol was sponsored by the Land Transportation Office, which also took care of the 600 packs distribution in Ragay, Camarines Sur. DOT Region 5 distributed the remaining 100 packs to the affected families of tourism officers and personnel in Albay, Camarines Sur, and Catanduanes. On the other hand, the distribution in Cagayan Valley was in coordination with the DOT Region 2.

As the DOT and TPB work on the recovery of Philippine tourism, the TPB also hopes that the distressed families will return to their everyday lives as soon as possible. We also pray that these regions, featuring some of the country's known adventure sites such as Mt. Mayon in Albay, Camarines Sur (wakeboarding), Catanduanes (surfing), and Cagayan (whitewater rafting), reopen soon to help the local community.



LTO Regional Director Francisco P. Ranches Jr. personally turned over 100 packs of relief goods to DOT Region 5 OIC Fe Buena.



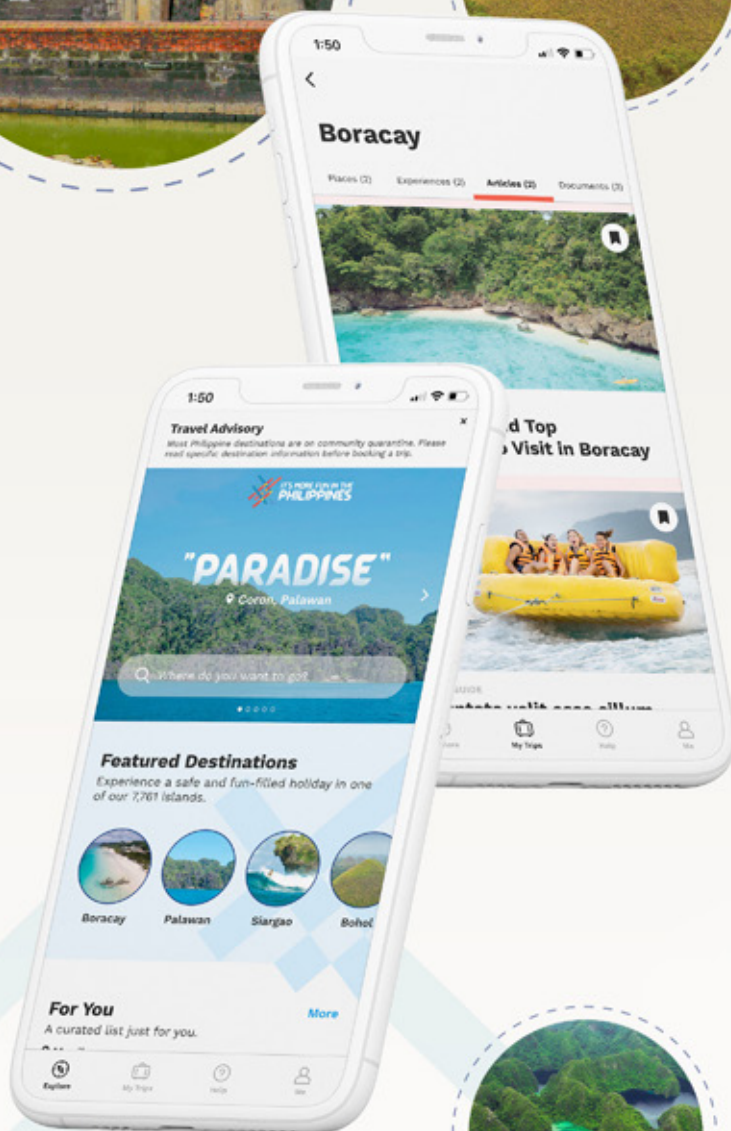
Five hundred relief bags distributed in the town of Enrile, Cagayan prioritizing senior citizens.





## REDISCOVER OUR 7,641 ISLANDS WITH TRAVEL PHILIPPINES

Travel Philippines is the official progressive web application of the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines. The app features tourist information, health and safety protocols, and everything you need to know about rediscovering and exploring your favorite Philippine destination in the new normal.



## VISIT NOW

for a safe and fun Philippine adventure!

Go to [app.philippines.travel](https://app.philippines.travel)

