

# TPB spotlight

E - B U L L E T I N

Tourism Promotions Board Philippines

MAY 2021

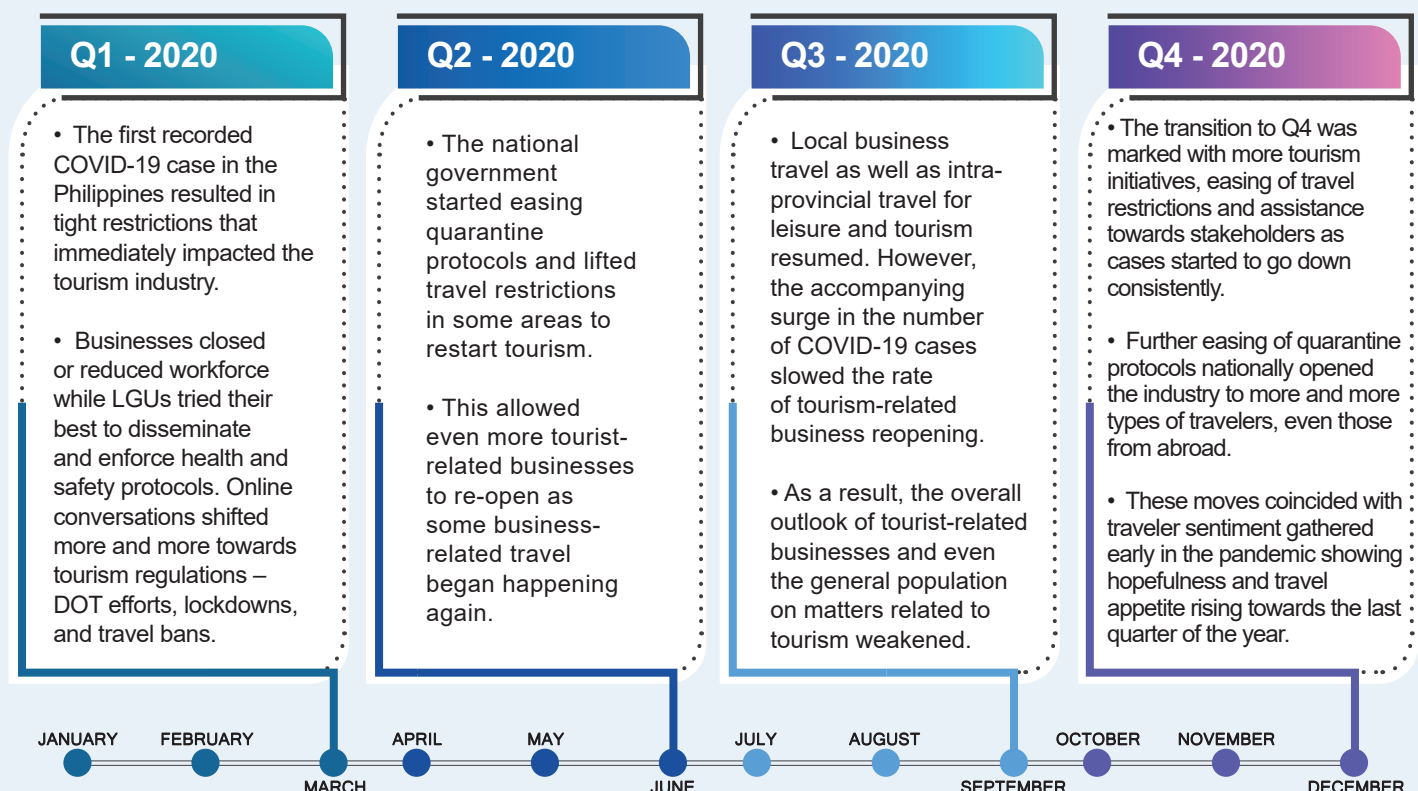
## STAKEHOLDERS SHOW CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM IN TOURISM RECOVERY

The pandemic is a catalyst for tremendous change that challenged all industries worldwide. While it rendered massive disruption to the normal way people live and conduct businesses, it also enabled the tourism industry to reset old practices and create a more resilient and sustainable travel and tourism sector in the country under the “new normal”.

Now, after more than a year since the pandemic began, how is the Philippine tourism recovery going?

The Philippine Survey and Research Center, Inc. (PSRC) took an inside look at how local tourism stakeholders perceive the new normal. A study was conducted on 13 November 2020 to 18 January 2021 with 77 participants from both the government and businesses within the tourism sector in an attempt to identify the barriers to promotion, target market changes, stakeholder confidence and market expectations relative to the future of travel and tourism in the Philippines. The research findings indicate that cautious optimism currently defines the “new normal” of the industry.

### THE STATE OF PHILIPPINE TOURISM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC



## CHALLENGES TO TOURISM RECOVERY

Even with the increase in travelers and community quarantine relaxing, stakeholder sentiment was still noticeably cautious because the challenges remained largely the same:



## CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM IN THE NEW NORMAL

As a result of the many challenges faced, the cautious optimism of stakeholders slowly dwindled as 2020 winded down. Though the positive signs at the start of 2021 sparked fresh optimism among stakeholders, a significant number remained uncertain.

## STAKEHOLDERS' SENTIMENTS IN 2021

SENTIMENTS	Stakeholders anticipated travel to still be predominantly local in Q1 followed by continued reopening to foreigners starting Q2, 2021.
	Many believed that opening to local travelers is already okay under MGCQ and once tourism-related restrictions are lifted, okay for both locals and foreigners.
	Many also said that conventions can restart only when a vaccine is available.
	The implementation of some health and safety protocols such as designating isolation areas, providing options for online payments/transactions, and developing an integrated emergency preparedness action is low although stakeholders recognized the effectiveness of these measures.
	Practical constraints such as the lack of budget, space, and poor internet connection prevent stakeholders from implementing all health and safety protocols without government support.
	For the sake of reopening and restarting the tourism industry, many believed that applying minimum standards for health & safety is enough in catering to various subgroups
	The above concerns underscored the need for government support and direction to assist stakeholders in transitioning to the new normal

## IN SUMMARY

During the conduct of the study, it was revealed that stakeholders were optimistic due to decreasing COVID-19 cases resulting in gradual reopening of the country's local tourism. However, this is dampened with cautiousness because of the same persisting issues carried on from last year such as the need to have clear, unified, and consistent protocols and more tangible support and direction to the tourism industry as essential in transitioning to the new normal.

As the second quarter of the year approached, the country experienced a spike in COVID-19 cases which soared past 1 million recorded infections in late April and a death toll nearing twenty

thousand as of press time. The steep rise in cases was attributed to the presence of new and transmissible variants as well as reported dwindling compliance with health protocols. In a bid to reverse this alarming upward trend, strict community quarantine measures in the NCR Plus were reimposed from March 15 until the end of April, followed by a two-week ECQ.

On the bright side, the Philippines has reached a milestone in its pandemic response with 4 million doses of vaccine administered nationwide, bringing the country closer to its goal of achieving herd immunity before year end.

WAKING THE SLEEPING GIANT:

# DOT CHINA RALLIES TO PUT THE PHILIPPINES ON TOP OF CHINA'S TRAVEL MARKET LIST



**M**ore than a year ago, China dealt with the emergence of a deadly virus that triggered a worldwide crisis. COVID-19, which originated in Wuhan, incited fear across the Mainland, resulting in lockdowns, closure of borders, and an eventual pandemic that would turn the lives of millions upside down.

"When news of the pandemic broke out in China, the atmosphere went dim," said DOT Shanghai Tourism Attaché Rene Reyes. "Due to the SARS experience, the government was overly cautious to ensure the safety of the citizens. From our end, there was a sense of frustration, especially because the timing coincided with the Chinese New Year holiday."

A year later, however, the tide has turned and now the atmosphere in Mainland China seems to be a far cry from the earlier days of the pandemic with cases averaging less than a hundred a day

since the second week of March. In fact, the Chinese market is starting to open for international face to face events including exhibitions, meetings and local festivals.

Is this a telltale sign that the virus is under control and that the Chinese travel market is ready to get back on the road? If so, will the Philippines be their top choice as the next travel destination?

Despite the incessant challenges in attracting the Chinese market, which include the complicated visa application / entry system to the Philippines and the limited air access from major tourist cities in China to Philippine destinations, DOT China is looking forward to ensure that the remainder of 2021 remains productive and that once our international borders reopen, the Chinese will see the Philippines as the destination of choice.

## DOT CHINA'S PLANS FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2021

1

Maintenance of DOT-China online platforms, WeChat, Weibo, Daoyuin (Tiktok) and website to expand the fan base

2

Tourism exhibitions and product presentations in Beijing, Xi'an, and Chengdu as well as dive themed product presentations

3

Online Philippine Business Mission

4

Work with online travel agents (OTAs) for new products based on specific consumers profile, travel preferences and patterns for better result

5

Implementation of the Philippine Specialist Program, an online training program for China's travel trade sector front liners for them to know more about the Philippines

6

Online media campaigns, live streaming, and collaboration with other government agencies, such as DTI, DOA, and DFA as they hold/join offline activities that can enhance the image of the Philippines in the market through local products, foods and investment

## PHILIPPINE DESTINATIONS TO PROMOTE

- Apart from promoting islands with convenient air access such as Boracay, Dumaguete, Palawan, Cebu and Bohol, PDOT-China is looking at a new trend of Chinese travel preference that no longer focuses on the popular but on what destinations can offer to foster personal growth and deepen relationships.
- Island activities, cuisine and customized / personalized tours

## PROMOTING THE PHILIPPINES IN THE TIME OF COVID

- Prompt releases of information on pandemic control status of destinations that will be open to international tourists
- Pre-departure PCR tests or certificates of vaccination
- Universal adaptation and acceptance of health code systems both in the Philippines and China
- Provide incentives and assistance to charter operators and travel agents to initiate new flights to the destinations
- Expand promotions to second and third tier cities and attract new markets
- Continue to participate in offline tourism events in China for greater exposure in the market
- Conduct trips for both travel trade and media to the Philippines once the Philippine borders reopen to build consumer confidence

## GETTING READY FOR THE FUTURE

Cooperation with online media or TV channels to produce content and programs on Philippine destinations and promote such programs online or via traditional media

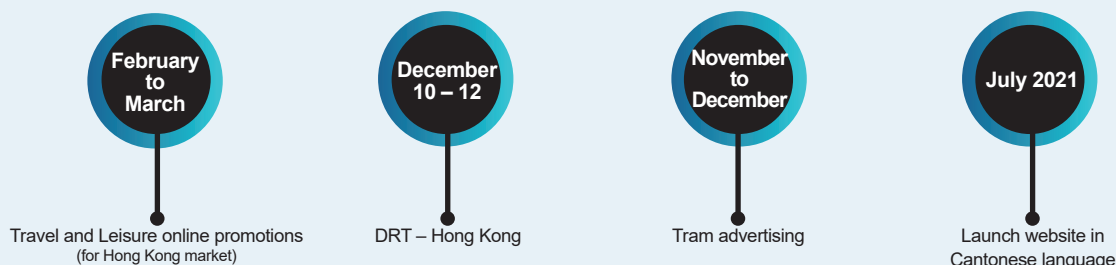
Continue to promote the Philippines by participating in offline events and conducting consumer and tactical promotions to raise awareness for the eventual reopening of the borders

## LIST OF EVENTS

### Southern China



### Hong Kong Market





# RECOVERY PLANS, DESTINATION UPDATES AND VACCINE FACTS SHARED WITH STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH TPB WEEKLY MEMBERS' CHAT



The Philippine tourism stakeholders were kept up-to-date with information on the current situations and issues affecting the country's tourism industry from representatives of local and international markets as well as the private sector through the Tourism Promotions Board's (TPB) Weekly Members' Chat.

The May Weekly Members' Chat started with a session conducted by Dr. Samuele Anton E. Quizon, Medical Officer III from the Program Implementation and Outreach Division of the Department of Health (DOH), who presented valuable data on the COVID-19 vaccines and explained the rationale and implementation strategies of the vaccination programs of the DOH.

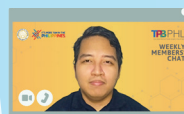
For destination updates, Mr. Alec Francis A. Santos, City Infrastructure and Development Coordinator for the City Government of Naga and Chief-of-Office for the Naga City Arts and Culture and Tourism, shared Naga City's Next to Normal Recovery Plan which involves marketing initiatives focused on attracting travelers with higher income levels or those whose income derives from outside the local economy. Their Next Normal Recovery Plan is a step-by-step process with solutions denoting the overhaul of institutional systems and improvement of personnel/employee dynamics and partnerships with the private sector.

In another destination update, Ms. Nelia A. Arina, Regional Director of Department of Tourism (DOT) Region XIII, illustrated the stringent site inspections and accreditation of destinations, accommodations, and establishments done by the local government units to ensure the strict implementation of health and safety protocols to mitigate transmission of COVID-19 in areas open for travel.

Meanwhile, Dr. Hazel V. Habito-Javier, Tourism Attaché of the Philippine Department of Tourism in Taipei (PDOT Taipei), reported on Taiwan's current COVID-19 situation and market updates. She also relayed the continuous marketing initiatives of the PDOT Taipei in promoting the Philippines in the Taiwan market.

And from the private sector, the Chairman of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Philippines Chapter, Mr. Roberto Z. Zozobrado, detailed their recovery initiatives for PATA members including providing periodic consultations for members, webinars for alternative sources of income and providing various support for tourism students of academic institutions through their student chapters. Mr. Zozobrado also highlighted PATA's collaboration with other tourism organizations in furnishing the government with vital information on the issues currently being dealt with by tourism stakeholders.

“It's about getting other people into vaccination as well, so it's about getting your Baranggay, your city involved, and your province involved for the COVID-19 vaccination. To protect most Filipinos, we need to achieve herd immunity, which is the base or target of 70% of the population.”



**Dr. Samuele Anton E. Quizon**  
DOH Program Implementation and Outreach Division

“This pandemic has shown us the inevitability of disruption to our tourism and travel industry. It has revealed our weaknesses, in terms of focusing mainly on quantity rather than quality. Moving beyond the horizon set by this crisis, we will do well to shift to a new paradigm, the Next Normal.”



**Mr. Alec Francis A. Santos**  
City Infrastructure and Development Coordinator  
for the City Government of Naga

“How do we reinstate travel confidence? We keep on telling our members now that the only way you can convince other people to either use your facilities, or visit your destination is to put the message across, how safe they will be when they are there.”



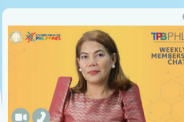
**Mr. Roberto Z. Zozobrado**  
Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)  
Philippines Chapter

“When we had an exploratory discussion with the Taiwan government about the travel bubble, we only sought the help of one umbrella organization of the travel trade, however nineteen (19) Travel and Tourism Association Chairmen of the whole Taiwan were there to support the Philippines. I think we have a good chance to recover the Taiwan market as long as we contain [the pandemic].”



**Hazel V. Habito-Javier, PhD**  
Tourism Attaché of the Philippine Department of  
Tourism in Taipei

“So, in a few months or in a few years, Siargao Island will really be a very sustainable island. They're not only there to showcase their destinations like the surfing side, we have the Magpupungko. We even have [the] surfing and game fishing but they can be sustainable in terms of their basic needs that they have, in terms of farm products.”



**Ms. Nelia A. Arina**  
Regional Director of Department of Tourism (DOT)  
Region XIII

# HAVE A SAFE TRIP, PINAS

## MUSEUM TREASURE TROVES FOR EVERYBODY!

Discover, reminisce, and be amazed by the rich culture of the Philippines!  
Check out and enjoy these museums around the Metro:



1

### Museong Pambata

Museong Pambata or Children's Museum is where learning begins and the fun never ends. This enjoyable and delightful place for the kids and the kids at heart offers themed rooms and play areas. What's more? It's a short distance walk to the Rizal Shrine. Visit: <https://www.museopambata.org/>



2

### The Mind Museum

A state-of-the-art non-profit project of Bonifacio Art Foundation that opened to the public in 2012, The Mind Museum is a haven for Science lovers and a place that will make you discover extraordinary trivia and appreciate what you have been taught in (Science) class.

It's located in the heart of the modern lifestyle and financial district of Taguig City. Go to <https://www.themindmuseum.org/> for official announcements and to also take a glimpse of the place where science comes alive.



3

### Ayala Museum

Located in Metro Manila's version of the "City That Never Sleeps", The Ayala Museum in Makati features historical and archeological artifacts and Filipino art treasures. It also hosts temporary exhibitions featuring works of National Artists.

Its convenient location - right across a mall - makes it a go-to place for learning and respite.



4

### Museo Filipino Intramuros

Managed by the Intramuros Administration, Museo Filipino features a museum gallery that gives an instant overview of Philippine History that goes all the way from the pre-colonial period to the present day.

For more updates, guidelines, and announcements about the re-opening of some of the tourist spots in Intramuros, visit <https://intramuros.gov.ph/>



5

### National Museum of the Philippines

The National Museum of the Philippines has four (4) branches that offer abundant historical, cultural, and even scientific notable attractions and extraordinary facts: National Museum of Natural History, National Museum of Anthropology, National Museum of Fine Arts, and National Planetarium. To learn more about the National Museum of the Philippines, visit <https://www.nationalmuseum.gov.ph> to take a journey back in time.

*\*As of this writing, most of these Museums are temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic until further notice. Check out these museums' Virtual Tour offers on their official websites*



# UPCOMING EVENTS - JUNE 2021



We have been nominated for several categories in the  
**28th World Travel Awards!**



**VOTE FOR PHILIPPINES**  
ASIA'S LEADING BEACH DESTINATION 2021



**VOTE FOR PHILIPPINES**  
ASIA'S LEADING DIVE DESTINATION 2021



**VOTE FOR INTRAMUROS**  
ASIA'S LEADING TOURIST ATTRACTION 2021



**VOTE FOR PHILIPPINE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM**  
ASIA'S LEADING TOURIST BOARD 2021



**VOTE FOR CEBU**  
ASIA'S LEADING WEDDING DESTINATION 2021



**VOTE FOR PHILIPPINES**  
ASIA'S BEST CRUISE DESTINATION 2021

## HOW TO VOTE:

Register at [www.worldtravelawards.com/register](http://www.worldtravelawards.com/register) for an account in order to cast your vote.

Vote for the Philippines for the following categories:

1. Asia's Leading Beach Destination 2021
2. Asia's Leading Dive Destination 2021
3. Asia's Leading Tourist Attraction 2021 - Intramuros, Philippines
4. Asia's Leading Tourist Board 2021 - Philippines, Department of Tourism
5. Asia's Leading Wedding Destination 2021 - Cebu, Philippines
6. Asia's Best Cruise Destination 2021\*

\* Vote for the Philippines at the cruise category at [www.worldcruiseawards.com](http://www.worldcruiseawards.com)

## TRAVEL INDUSTRY VOTERS

Members of the Tourism and Travel Industry may register as an industry voter by providing company and association details during registration.

Votes cast by verified industry voters will count as two votes while non-industry member votes will count as one.

Register as a travel industry voter at [www.worldtravelawards.com/register](http://www.worldtravelawards.com/register)





# *Maligayang Ika-123 taon ng Araw ng Kasarinlan, Pilipinas!*

————— Hunyo 12 —————

“Sa dagat at bundok,  
Sa simoy at sa langit mong bughaw  
May dilag ang tula  
At awit sa paglayang minamahal”