

# TPB spotlight

A Quarterly e-Magazine of the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2021

## TPB MEMBERS LEAD ODETTE OUTREACH EFFORTS

### TPB'S 2021 GAINS

FORGE A BRIGHTER PATH  
FOR A FULL TOURISM  
RESTART IN 2022

### PILGRIM TOURS

TPB LAUNCHES FAITH-BASED  
AND HERITAGE TOURISM

### DOT, TPB'S PHILIPPINE MOTORCYCLE TOURISM HITS THE ROAD

TRAVEL INDUSTRY BOUNCES BACK

### EXPO 2020 DUBAI

PHILIPPINES BOOSTS PARTICIPATION



# spotlight

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COVER:  
Odette Outreach Efforts

In this issue, we put a spotlight on the spirit of sharing and giving shining through the TPB Members community to aid the victims of Typhoon Odette, and the numerous ways on how TPB stays ahead of the innovation game, driven by a motivation to provide the Philippine tourism industry stakeholders with quality projects and programs.

## ON THE SPOT

As we flip through this quarter's issue and look back at the highlights of the year, we are reminded that what we have accomplished together goes a long way and will propel us forward to do even better in 2022. Truly, 2021 was a dynamic year for all of us in the tourism industry. We had our share of struggles, leaps of faith, and renewed commitment for excellence which are reflected in the roster of our shared accomplishments for the year.

In this final 2021 issue, we take you back in a fun-filled recollection of our "It's More Fun With You" domestic welcome-back campaign so you can shake hands (or paws) with our furry buddy, the surfing dog, Tuna and relive the excitement of looking forward to our travel plans in the better normal. While we are at it, we also share fun learning insights from the 2nd Tourism & Technology Forum and PDOT Osaka's Educational Seminars; and celebrate our big wins from the SKAL International Awards, 2021 World Travel Awards, 28th Travel Tour Expo. We also walk you through how TPB maintained its ISO Certification on its 6th consecutive year.

We would also like to put the spotlight on how we were able to stay ahead of the innovation game, driven by our motivation to provide our industry stakeholders with quality projects and programs, thus stage the hybrid Regional Travel Fair-Zamboanga and MICECONNECT 2021 in Boracay. Trailblazing with private sector partners, we successfully launched the Philippine Motorcycle Tourism in November and the Pilgrim Tours in December. And we proudly did our share of promoting our country in various projects we supported as part of the Expo 2020 Dubai.

By the third of week of December, as we were finding ways to reach out to our destination communities severely damaged by super typhoon Odette, the response that came in kind, cash and efforts from among our TPB members was overwhelming and was a source of strength, hope and inspiration that illumined those dark days. The spirit of generosity and malasakit shone through the TPB Members community, and personally, I thanked God for such an unexpected precious gift of sharing and giving. It made Christmas real, meaningful and yes, more fun.

And that's why we decided to put the Spotlight on our TPB Members in this final issue.



As we thank God for 2021, it is my prayer and wish that we step into the New Year with a renewed sense of faith, hope and love.

MARIA ANTHONETTE C. VELASCO-ALLONES, CEO &  
Chief Operating Officer  
Tourism Promotions Board - Philippines



# TPB'S 2021 GAINS FORGE A BRIGHTER PATH FOR A FULL TOURISM RESTART IN 2022

**Resiliency and recovery** - these are the terms that defined the landscape of the Philippine industry during the pandemic. And if 'virtual' was the key word for 2020, 'hybrid' is the one for 2021. The TPB, along with other tourism stakeholders, have shifted, once again, to challenge what is considered the current norm and rolled out a blend of in-person and virtual events in 2021.

Major highlights this year include TPB-organized events such as the second hybrid Philippine Travel Exchange (PHITEX) in Subic, two hybrid editions of the Regional Travel Fair in Eastern Visayas and Zamboanga City, two editions of the Tourism and Technology Forum in March and October, the launch of the "It's More Fun with You" campaign in October and the Pilgrim Tours in December, the Philippine Motorcycle Tourism kick-off ride and the Philippine MICECONnect 2021 in October - this time in hybrid edition and first time held outside Metro Manila.

More than these, 2021 was the year when TPB went full throttle in its maneuvering around the challenges and limitations brought by the current health crisis. Banking on its key strategic pillars SMARTourism, Partnerships as Pathways, and Safe Bangon Turismo, TPB explored market

trends and implemented strategies agilely, helping spur improvements in its support to the industry.

The agency also launched three banner programs - Habi (weaving) to sustain traditional weaving practices; Hilot/Hilom, which focuses on wellness and transformative journeys; and promotion of Halal cuisine as contribution to the livelihood of our Muslim communities.

On the travelers' front, TPB subsidized 50% of the RT-PCR test kit costs for domestic tourists which enabled almost 25,000 tourists to visit reopened destinations. It later expanded its program to 100% coverage in partnership with the Philippine Children's Medical Center. Additionally, the agency procured 12,500 PHILCare Kits distributed to tourism workers and local travelers nationwide. These efforts are in line with TPB being able to go with the flow in terms of the lockdown to create opportunities but always keeping in mind the safety not only of the tourists and travelers but also the host destinations and its communities.

The TPB also took the role of the industry's synergy builder to forge stronger collaborations among the local government units and the private sector so that best practices may be replicated across the country and to steer recovery initiatives more sustainably. The TPB Membership Program was ramped up to extend support to private tourism stakeholders during the pandemic through financial assistance, marketing and promotions, networking, capacity-building and business development opportunities. It includes tourism webinars and the staging of the TPB Weekly Members' Chat held every Wednesday

which serves as a platform for updates, interaction and best practice-sharing among TPB and its members. To date, it has 517 members.

Through its Domestic Promotions Department, TPB continues to provide support to tourism associations and stakeholders such as the Philippine Travel Agencies Associations (PTAA), Tourism Congress of the Philippines (TCP), National Association of Independent Travel Agencies (NAITAS), Philippine Tour Operators Association, Inc. (PHILTOA) and various LGUs on their events, marketing, branding and digital campaigns. Tourism marketing educational seminars were also hosted for the continuous rediscovery of Philippine tourism destinations' existing and emerging tourism products in terms of their readiness for marketing and promotions to all travelers. One of its major campaigns this year is the launch of the interactive game-based tourism marketing - Travel Bingo, now on its second season, to encourage people to rebuild their confidence to travel.

Meanwhile, borders may be closed but this did not hamper TPB's International Promotions Department to carry on marketing the Philippines in various source markets. Virtual participation in international tourism events were aplenty. Digital promotion initiatives were also boosted, along with staged consumer activations and tactical ad campaigns to revive the foreign market's interests and confidence in the Philippines as a preferred and sophisticated destination in Asia.



PHITEX 2021, 19-23 September 2021 Subic Bay



Philippine Motorcycle Tourism, 19 November 2021 Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City



Hybrid Regional Travel Fair in Tacloban, Leyte last 05 to 08 August 2021

Among international virtual events attended were ITB Berlin, ITB Asia, the Great 2021 ASEAN Travel Fest, Arabian Travel Market, Virtual PATA Travel Mart, Diving, Resort and Travel (DRT) events, Incentive Travel and Conventions Meetings, ASTA Global Convention, World Travel Mart, Matta International Travel Fair, Taipei Tourism Expo, and others.

The future of MICE in the Philippines is also ripe in potential. With the formation of the Boracay MICE Alliance, MICECONnect 2021 was held in Boracay, a major step in positioning the world's best islands as a premier leisure and MICE destination. TPB's MICE Plus Program was also enhanced to provide support to events with buyer programs, and bidding and assistance to domestic and international MICE events held in the Philippines. Furthermore, the hosting of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC) Global Summit in 2022 is also a prime opportunity to highlight the country as a promising MICE destination, which is a key strategy to revive the economy and generate employment.

Amid numerous programs and activities for the industry, TPB has support initiatives in place for its employees. The ramped up efforts in ensuring the health and wellness of its personnel are focused on administration of vaccines, annual physical examinations, medical consultant services, Emergency Quick Response, and Get Well Soon boxes. It has an active sector on Gender and Development through policy implementations and awareness programs to highlight gender equality at the workplace. Personal development for all is also continuing with regular Monday virtual learning sessions through "ThinkTalk", offering public seminars for employees and

other in-house learning and development interventions. In the coming year, TPB places priority in getting vaccine boosters and adopting tech solutions in personnel management such as the Human Resource Management Information System.

Truly, the pandemic has been an ultimate equalizer. There were ample difficulties and obstacles along the way but the moments of victory and triumph after every event and partnerships make every ounce of effort worth it to help the Philippine tourism industry bounce back. Continuously ensuring a balance between health, fun, and safety, TPB has more of these plans, programs, and activities in the pipeline.

Looking forward to sharing the vision of an integrated tourism industry in the new year, TPB expresses its staunch commitment to fully support and extend a helping hand to all stakeholders. A never-ending gratitude for making TPB achieve feats together with your support, despite all odds. More fun awaits in 2022!



MICECONNECT 2021, 13-15 November 2021 Motag Living Museum in Malay, Aklan

# TPB Members Lead Odette Outreach Efforts

While most people carried on with their usual holiday errands and prepared for their upcoming *Noche Buena*, the ones in the Visayas and Mindanao areas in the country remained unsettled and worried about how they could survive the cold and stormy night when Super Typhoon Odette (international name Rai) took its toll and made landfall on December 16.

As various government agencies geared up to provide relief and respond to the needs of the typhoon-stricken communities, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) and its members promptly heeded the call and walked the extra mile to organize a project as a collective response to the emergent situation.

## “Community Passion”

After Super Typhoon Odette (international name Rai) ravaged the Visayas and Mindanao region, the Tourism Promotions Board, spearheaded a relief drive as part of its TPB Members Community Passion (ComPassion) Project at the Puerto Real Gardens, Intramuros, on December 22.

What originally was set to be a culminating activity for the TPB members quickly became an avenue to help communities that were reeling from lack of water, food, and shelter in the Typhoon Odette-affected areas.



TPB Chief Operating Officer, Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones and Intramuros Administrator Guiller B. Asido were on-site to help organize the flow of donations from TPB’s member establishments and organizations.

“So many things may have happened over the past few days, but the Bayanihan Spirit shone through,” said Administrator Asido.

More than 50 boxes of goods composed of bottled water, milk, food items, hygiene supplies, as well as sacks of rice were endorsed to the 1st Air Reserve Center of the Philippine Air Force for shipment to affected areas including Siargao, Bohol, Cebu, Palawan, and Negros Island, which are also regarded as some of the prime tourism destinations in the country.



## Flow of Support

It is a bit paradoxical that while heavy rain poured in the Odette-hard-hit areas in the country, drinking water had become one of the scarcest resources. This was true, at least for Queenie Alegarbes, a single mom of a 13-year old from Busay, Cebu who expressed that while being aware of the coming typhoon, she never expected that it could bring so much damage in her life, apart from losing her job over the pandemic.

“Ang problema po talaga naming ay tubig na maiinom. Alam naming na may paparating na bagyo pero hindi namin inasahan na ganito talaga ang magiging epekto.” Queenie shared as she also pointed out that their situation worsened in the next 48 hours while local relief efforts were still winding up.

Just like Queenie, other locals of the affected areas expressed the same sentiments over clean drinking water which prompted the TPB and its members to prioritize the valued resource through the purchase of gallons of drinking water using most of the cash donations of at least Php 82,500.00.

“Sobrang laking tulong po ng mga natanggap naming na donasyon, lalo na po ang tubig dahil talagang mahirap po makakuha at kailangan mo pa pumila ng madaling araw para lang makainom ng malinis na tubig” Queenie expressed her gratitude behind the pale smile as she continued her errands for the day.

## Generosity from the Heart

“The donations that poured in, given the short notice, is a testament that we, Filipinos, are truly willing to help each other, most especially in critical and difficult times,” PHILTOA President Fe Abling Yu shared as she led her organization’s conveyance of donation during the relief drive in Intramuros.

The TPB Members ComPassion project also coincided with a recognition program for the tourism private sector which not only made significant contributions to the Philippine tourism industry in the current year but also walked the extra mile despite being affected by various challenges as well.

“In spite of the hurdles that the industry faces at present, our tourism private sectors have proven what generosity from the heart is all about. They may have struggled, yet they continue to help those in need,” COO Velasco-Allones shared.

# TPB Maintains ISO Certification for Six Years in a Row

For six years running, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) continues to prove its commitment towards the improvement of its management systems by successfully maintaining its **ISO 9001:2015 certification** in its yearly International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Certification audit for 2021.

The audit last 21 October 2021 was done by independent and accredited certification body TUV Nord Philippines, Inc. who reaffirmed the compliance of the existing processes on design, development, and provision of Philippine tourism marketing and promotions of the agency against the requirements of ISO standards.

TUV Nord Philippines, Inc. also commended TPB for good practices which included the attainment of Very Satisfactory customer feedback, control and monitoring processes of the Corporate Planning and Business Development Department and Domestic Promotions Department, and the monitoring of the status and updates of contracts / agreements of the Legal Department.

The TPB's ISO 9001:2015 certification adheres to the Executive Order No. 605, S. 2007, which requires all departments and agencies of the Executive branch, including all government-owned and/or controlled corporations (GOCCs), to adopt the ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management Systems as part of the implementation of a government-wide quality management program.

As an attached GOCC of the Department of Tourism, the TPB is mandated to market and promote the Philippines domestically and internationally as a world-class tourism and Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) destination. The TPB first received its ISO Certification on 21 January 2016 and has been a consistent ISO Certified organization since.



**Scope of the Audit:**

**Design, development, and provision of Philippine tourism marketing and promotions services**




## CERTIFICATE

Management system as per  
**ISO 9001: 2015**

The Certification Body TUV NORD CERT GmbH hereby confirms as a result of the audit, assessment and certification decision according to ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, that the organization

**Tourism Promotions Board Philippines**  
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operates a management system in accordance with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 and will be assessed for conformity within the 3 year term of validity of the certificate.

Scope  
**Design, Development, and Provision of Philippine Tourism Marketing and Promotions Services**

Certificate Registration No. PHP QMS 21 93 0061

Valid from 2021-11-21  
Valid until 2024-11-20  
Initial Certification 2021-11-21

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This certification was conducted in accordance with the TUV NORD PHILIPPINES, INC. auditing and certification procedures and is subject to regular surveillance audits.

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## TPB Celebrates 500 YOC in Philippines with Faith-Based, Heritage Tourism Program - Pilgrim Tours

The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines launched the Faith-based and Heritage Tourism program on December 8 with a pilgrims familiarization tour in Manila as part of the commemoration and celebration of the 500 Years of Christianity (500 YOC) in the country.

The said pilgrim familiarization tour, in partnership with Creative Travel and Tours International (CTTI) and Radio Veritas (RV) Global Broadcasting System, aims to strengthen and relive faith-based and heritage as one of the earliest forms of tourism.

"This initiative is a testament to our faith. The distinction of this country as a tourist destination is that we can authentically claim that we are the Catholic seat in Asia. Despite our current pandemic situation, today is the day we embark on this journey," said TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette Velasco – Allones.



Representatives from TPB and its members, Department of Tourism (DOT), CTTI, and RV toured three of Manila's Jubilee Churches namely the Minor Basilica and Metropolitan Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (Manila Cathedral), Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene

(Quiapo Church), and Basilica Minore de San Sebastian (San Sebastian Church), with new normal health and safety protocols in place.

The said activity included an actual tour of the mentioned churches, passage through the Porta Santa or Jubilee Door, praying of the Holy Rosary, spiritual talks and confession officiated by Rev. Fr. Arnold Layoc of Radio Veritas as the pilgrim tour's recollection master.



Following the launch, TPB and CTTI are set to implement a series of pilgrim tour circuits this year in Bulacan-Pampanga on January 13-14, Cebu-Bohol on January 24-27, and CALABARZON during the second week of February, featuring quincennial Jubilee churches and its historical significances.

"We are hopeful that through this program we are not only opening opportunities to rediscover our rich religious heritage by visiting the YOC jubilee churches, but also allowing Filipinos to experience and exercise their faith in the new normal," Rev. Fr. Arnold Layoc shared.

TPB's Faith-based and Heritage Tourism program is expected to support the domestic welcome-back campaign which encourages local travelers to explore the country and showcase the richness of Philippine culture deeply rooted in faith and religious beliefs.

# SKAL International Hails TPB COO Velasco-Allones as 2021 Tourism Personality Awardee for Government Service

**M**ANILA, PHILIPPINES – Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines Chief Operating Officer (COO) Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones is the 2021 SKAL International Makati’s Tourism Personality for Government Service, which was awarded at the Heritage Hotel, Pasay City on 18 November.

COO Velasco-Allones thrived as a leader in the midst of the pandemic and unprecedented times, having been able to accomplish huge feats through her leadership in the TPB including the staging of various hybrid and innovative tourism marketing and promotions efforts and initiatives covering domestic and international scenes and bolstering the MICE industry which positioned the Philippines as a top-of-mind destination for business and leisure and contributed to a more fun, safe, and uniquely diverse tourism experience in the country.

Moreover, through her untiring determination, the TPB was able to provide 100% subsidy for RT-PCR testing in partnership with the Philippine Children’s Medical Center (PCMC), which paved the way for the increase in the trust and confidence for domestic welcome-back tourism. Her efforts also led to the growth of the TPB membership program from 106 in 2020 to 517 members to date.

“This award does not only validate what we have accomplished in the Tourism Promotions Board, under my leadership, through the 21 months that I have been COO but also affirms that when we work together through the TPB membership [program], we are able to achieve a lot of things not for ourselves but for higher purposes which we all share,” COO Velasco-Allones said.



Other awardees of the famed annual event are Michael Jaey Albaña, Commercial Director of Conrad Hotel Manila, for Five-Star Hotel Category; Former Tourism Secretary Dr. Mina Gabor, now President of International School of Sustainable Tourism Philippines (ISST), for Farm Tourism Category; Sarah J. Monzon Po, Director for Operations at Hotel Fleuris Palawan, President of TEAM Philippines-MIMAROPA Chapter, owner and General Manager of Aji Travel and Tour Corporation, for Travel Agent Category; Angel Ramos Bognot, President of Afro Asian World of Events and NITAS, for M.I.C.E Category; Department of Tourism Region 7 Director Shalimar Hofer Tamano for Region Director Category; Farid Schoucair, Heritage Hotel Manila General Manager for Four-Star Hotel Category; Mikel Arrieta, General Manager of Anya Resorts Tagaytay for Hotel and Resort Category; and Cheche Moral, Philippine Daily Inquirer Lifestyle Editor for Print Media Category.

SKAL International Makati is a member of Skål International, the world’s largest global network of tourism professionals promoting tourism, business, and friendship worldwide. Its members collaborate to address issues of common interest, improving a business network and promoting destinations.

The first Skal Club was founded in 1932 in Paris by travel managers following an educational tour of Scandinavia. The idea of international goodwill and friendship grew, and in 1934, the “Association Internationale des Skal Clubs” was established.



# WITH TPB READY, NO EMERGENCY IS A SURPRISE

In his 18 years working as a security guard at the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, Joey Tiagan has experienced some emergencies while on duty. The most recent is the back-to-back Taal volcanic eruption and the big fire that broke a few floors above the TPB Office last year. Some office properties were literally covered in ashes.



“I was on my way home that time, when I heard that there was a fire on the 8th floor, so I ran back to help my colleagues on duty. We secured the office and covered the electronic equipment to avoid damage,” recalled SG Tiagan.

TPB’s quick response and commitment, including the security and cleaning teams, helped save both lives and properties. As a result, no one got hurt, and all properties were secured.

## Early Beginnings

It pays to prepare for these emergencies in advance. As far back as 2014, TPB has laid the foundation for emergency preparedness. Spearheaded by then Manager of the Administrative Department, Ms. Janet Canoy, preparation of the occupational safety and health (OSH) policies was formalized.

“We had a fire drill and identified the members of the safety team as well as the (emergency) needs of the office,” relayed Ms. Janet. The Bureau of Fire Protection rated this activity. After that, the safety team attended a training organized by the Department of Tourism. TPB personnel received hard hats and whistles, and an orientation on safety guidelines was conducted.



## Recent Initiatives

The cleaning team at TPB is all-out supportive and prepared as well. Whenever there are typhoons, the team has a ready checklist and quickly reports any damage to the management. “We always keep the

office clean and sanitized,” stated Mr. Jaime Penaverde, head of the cleaning staff.

Yet, no one was prepared enough for the world phenomenon that came in the form of the Coronavirus Disease Pandemic in 2019 (COVID-19). For the first time in many years, TPB conducted emergency procurement for items to help avert the spread of COVID-19, such as care kits for stranded tourists. In addition, TPB was among the government agencies that quickly responded through internal policies, awareness campaigns for the tourism sector, and other support initiatives.

With TPB’s preparedness and cooperative personnel, the pandemic has not been a deterrent in maintaining and strengthening the agency’s emergency attentiveness. For example, on November 11, 2021, when the nation joined the online earthquake drill, the TPB held an actual drill at the TPB office located at Roxas Boulevard, Manila with its skeleton staff. The Corporate Affairs Office led the activity.

“The descent from the 4th-floor office to the evacuation area at the parking lot took 5 minutes and 29 seconds, which is within the 6-minute target,” said Ms. Jocelyn Patrice L. Deco, the Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Corporate Affairs who also heads the TPB Safety Team and the TPB Central Command Center for Emergencies.

The following day, TPB personnel learned more about emergency preparedness and OSH from the President of OSHNET CALABARZON, Engineer Amador Tagun. In addition, Engineer Tagun shared essential occupational health and safety practices during TPB’s town hall meeting via Zoom.

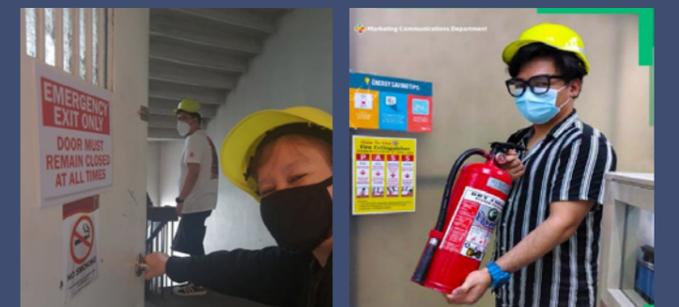
## Preparing for the Future

TPB continues to reinforce its emergency preparedness. With the agency’s safety policy updated and approved this year by the Chief Operating Officer, Atty. Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones, various activities are in the pipeline. The policy includes the distribution of Emergency Go Bags for all TPB personnel.

A photo contest dubbed the Safeteams Groupie Challenge also took place to raise awareness of these safety programs. Winners were announced on December 10.

“We can be creative while we prepare for emergencies, for better recall,” shared the Head of the TPB Procurement and General Services Division (PGSD), Ms. Eloisa Romero, when asked about the objectives of the contest.

On the overall preparedness of TPB, she added, “More than ticking the checklist, it is the culture of safety that we all have to keep in our minds and our hearts. This is how we show and imbibe readiness at TPB.”



# 2ND TOURISM & TECHNOLOGY FORUM: READYING FOR A DIFFERENT FUTURE



In her closing message, TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones quoted the famous five words of the late futurist and celebrated author, Alvin Toffler, to wrap up the 2nd Tourism & Technology Forum: "The future will be different."

COO Allones emphasized the significance of technology as a tool which can be utilized to hurdle future challenges. "Technology is a driver of change and is not meant to be our master. It is meant to connect us and inspire meaning in these connections and serve us and our purpose, which is to make our lives better," she said.

Throughout the event, which was livestreamed from the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) from October 7-8, industry experts introduced technology as the virtual companion of brands or businesses to achieve goals or as one of the keys to build connections through various digital platforms.



Technology was also highlighted for the role it plays to get the tourism industry back on its feet. The Ayala and the Yuchengco Museums, for example, have been digitally transformed to meet the demands for culture and the arts amidst the pandemic.

More importantly, technology was presented not as the be-all and end-all for progress. Discussions on "Digital Content Marketing: The Art of Storytelling," "5 Traveler Trends to Watch Out For" and even "Riding the Wave of Work from Anywhere" proved that there is still work to be done and learning to happen in order to secure the future.



"Through the use of information and communications technology, tourists will have greater access to our destinations and tourism products, services, and experiences. Through technology, we hope to further our advocacy of sustainable tourism development and encourage more partnerships with stakeholders and local communities," said DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat during the opening day.

Originally designed as a hybrid event, the second edition of the Tourism & Technology Forum went

fully virtual after the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases announced that Metro Manila will remain under General Community Quarantine (Alert Level 4), which does not allow large gatherings and Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) events to take place. The Tourism & Technology Forum is anchored in SMARTourism, one of the TPB's strategic directions, aimed at leveraging and optimizing the use of technology to make the Philippines not just safe, fun, and competitive but also a recognized SMARTourism destination.

# Meet the Furry Star of the 'It's More Fun with You' Campaign Video

When the Department of Tourism (DOT) and Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines unveiled the "It's More Fun with You" video on October 23, they banked on the charm and talent of a surfing dog named Tuna.

In the video—which was made to welcome domestic tourists back to the country's tourism destinations as part of the "Have a Safe Trip, Pinas" campaign—Tuna proved that he could hang ten with the best of them.



He was also shown excitedly welcoming a human friend back to the beach after a long absence, which Tuna's furdad Rico Dumaguin says is exactly how he is off-cam. According to Rico, Tuna loves being around people, so it wasn't hard for him to get into character for the shoot.

"Mabait at matalino si Tuna. He doesn't have formal training, pero sanay na sanay na siya sa tao. Hindi nahirapan si Trish, his human co-star in the video. They only had five hours to bond before the shoot started, pero nakapag-establish agad sila ng rapport with each other," he says.

Rico, who hails from the barangay of Urbiztondo in San Juan, La Union, adds that Tuna has always loved being in the water. Although he nearly drowned on one of his first trips to the beach, that didn't keep him from developing what would become a lifelong fascination with the ocean.



"Lagi namin siya kasama sa beach. Tapos one day, bigla siyang sumama sa amin sa tubig kasi nainggit siya. When he was three months old, tinuruan namin siya lumangoy. He started surfing at five months. Sanay na siya sa tubig so hindi siya takot. Tapos tuwing makikita niya kaming mag-su-surf, tahol siya ng tahol kasi gusto niyang sumama sa amin sa dagat. So kapag maliit yung alon, sinasakay ko lang siya sa board."

Although Tuna's playful nature made the shoot slightly difficult because he sometimes broke character to frolic with everyone on set, the video's director, Direk ER Alviz said he was a dream to work with. For instance, Tuna braved the ocean even though the waves were big on the day of the shoot. He was one year and two months old at the time.



"First time niya pala to surf with big waves noon, pero kinaya naman niya. He's a brave boy. Parang sanctuary niya yung dagat. We just had to make sure na hindi makita ni Tuna si Rico during the shoot, kasi nawawala siya sa focus. Talagang nagiging hyper siya."

Tuna had ample time to rest in between takes. A vet was also on standby in case something happened to him, but he proved to be so good at what he does that the shoot went off without a hitch.

"Instinct na niya kagatin yung board kapag nahuhulog siya sa tubig," added Direk ER.

"It's More Fun with You" encourages Filipinos to travel and explore the country again after a long hiatus due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. It also supports recovery initiatives of the tourism industry, according to a statement from the DOT and the TPB.

# M.I.C.E. CONnect 2021 POSITIONS BORACAY AS ASIA'S PREMIER BLEISURE DESTINATION

Boracay Island, Aklan – The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines and the Department of Tourism (DOT), in collaboration with the Boracay MICE Alliance, successfully staged this year's MICE Buyers Invitational Program, also known as MICECONNECT 2021, in Boracay on November 13 to 15, positioning the world's best island as a premier leisure and MICE destination.

The event gathered 52 online sellers of MICE products and services composed of meeting facilities, hotels and resorts, tour and transport operators, event management companies, and destination management companies.

A total of 48 registered buyers coming from both private and public sectors as local and international MICE planners and organizers, of which 23 were onsite, joined the two-day inspection of properties and venues that can be considered for future MICE events. Antigen tests and health and safety kits were provided and distancing measures were observed to ensure the safety of the event delegates.

A full day business-to-business (B2B) meeting was also arranged via the virtual platform, generating an estimated revenue of Php 27,000,000.00 for two contracted events and leads of nine MICE events starting in December of 2021.

"MICECONNECT 2021 is a major step forward in bringing more people of the industry together whether you're interacting face-to-face or virtually. We hope that we've provided a good platform for all participants to expand their network, discuss golden business opportunities, create new partnerships, or cement old ones", said Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat.

As the Philippine MICE industry bolsters its readiness efforts, MICECONNECT reflects the growing confidence in Boracay's capability to host incentive travel and small to medium-sized conferences and other corporate events in the future.

In appreciation of the value of MICECONNECT, one of the buyers, Ian Laroda of Travel Warehouse Inc. noted that "MICECONNECT really paved the way to connect the businesses and the communities. It becomes a way of giving back to our tourism workers because they also benefit from business gains. It becomes a win-win relationship and I am very happy to have experienced this in MICECONNECT Boracay".

"Apart from renewed opportunities, MICECONNECT gave us hope," said Serafin Javelona of Southwest Tours Boracay. "As a MICE seller based in Boracay, our livelihoods were greatly affected by the pandemic. Through MICECONNECT, I realized that now is the time to bounce back and increase tourists' confidence to travel and do business once again."

Given this as well as the support of MICE buyers, it seems that the local MICE industry is on a positive trajectory. And with renewed interest in bringing local, regional and international events - not only in Boracay, but in other Philippine destinations, recovery is imminent.



# DOT, TPB'S PHILIPPINE MOTORCYCLE TOURISM HITS THE ROAD, TRAVEL INDUSTRY BOUNCES BACK



**M**anila, Philippines – Over 250 riders revved up and hopped on the Philippine Motorcycle Tourism (PMT) two-day ride which kicked-off at Rizal Park, Manila and covered Taal Lake Loop (Cavite-Batangas) and Laguna Lake Loop (Rizal-Laguna-Quezon), highlighting CALABARZON's tourist spots last Nov. 20 – 21.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, in partnership with Breakfast Ride Community, DOT Region IV-A and different local government units (LGUs) of CALABARZON, spearheaded the innovative program to bring back the confidence of the public to travel within the country, while upholding new normal health and safety protocols, on two wheels.

“Our current efforts are focused on boosting domestic tourism as a way for the tourism industry and the economy to recover. In line with this, motorcycle riders become our domestic tourism ambassadors to aid us in promoting fun and safe travel around the country. We are now on the road to sustain recovery and with the help of our riders, motorcycle clubs and associations, the tourism industry will be back in full swing in no time,” said Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat in her keynote address.

## PMT PRIORITIZES SAFETY, SKILLS, ADVENTURE TOURISM

As part of PMT's priorities and preparations prior to the kick-off ride, participants both on-site and online attended the hybrid webinar which was aired from the Philippine International

Convention Center (PICC) and made virtually available through an online platform, garnering more than 3,000 livestream views on social media last November 19.

The said webinar equipped motorcycle riders and enthusiasts with knowledge on safe riding, off-road driving techniques and skills, and adventure tourism through the expertise of Rod Cruz of the Arangkada Riders' Alliance, Gen. Fernando Paez of the Law Enforcer Riders' Association of the Philippines, and Mel Aquino of the Yamaha Off-Road Training Camp.

“Our community is privileged to be part of the organizing committee for the kick-off of this program. We are elated for the support of the tourism industry because we really want this to take-off. Just the news that destinations are open for motorcycle tourism will signal all riders to go around, see places, and eat in restaurants — if you pool together the income generated by millions of riders around the country, it will be a big business opportunity for tourism,” said Breakfast Ride Community Head Raymon Gabriel.

## CALABARZON IN THE LOOP

Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat, TPB Chief Operating Officer (COO) Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones, Philippine Motorcycle Tourism Advocate and former Senator JV Ejercito, DENR Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo, Jr., Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Lt. Gen. Dionardo Carlos, DOT CALABARZON Regional Director Maritess Castro and DOT Assistant Secretary

Woodrow Maquiling sent off the PMT riders from participating motorcycle clubs and associations for the CALABARZON Ride composed of two major loops.

The Taal Lake Loop (Cavite-Batangas) included stops in Maragondon (Habi of Maragondon, Simbahan ng Maragondon, Caingin River), Tagaytay, Taal (Basilica San Martin De Tours, Marcella Agoncillo Historical Landmark, Apacible Historical Landmark), San Juan (Laiya), Lipa (Mary Mediatrix of All Grace Church), Mataasnakahoy (My Honey's Farm), Sto. Tomas (National Shrine of Padre Pio), and Sta. Rosa (Nuvali Park).

On the other hand, the Laguna Lake Loop (Rizal-Laguna-Quezon) covered Antipolo (Antipolo Cathedral, Hinulugang Taktak) Tanay (Daranak Falls), Pililia (Pililia Windmills, Pakil (St. Peter of Alcantara Parish Church), Paete, Luisiana (pandan weaving), Lucban (Kamay ni Hesus), San Juan (Laiya), Dolores (Bangkong Kahoy Valley), San Pablo City (Sulyap Gallery Cafe), and Sta. Rosa Nuvali Park.

Cebu MotoVlogger and Philippine Motorcycle Tourism Ambassador Jet Lee expressed her appreciation to TPB and DOT's efforts in revitalizing the travel industry through motorcycle tourism. “Everyone knows I'm very passionate about riding because it's my outlet. Every time I hit the road, I feel really free. I appreciate that DOT and TPB are doing their best to help the tourism [industry] bounce back and consider motorcycle tourism as a viable market. I am excited to inspire and encourage other people to try the adventure of motorcycle riding,” said Lee.

## FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR PMT

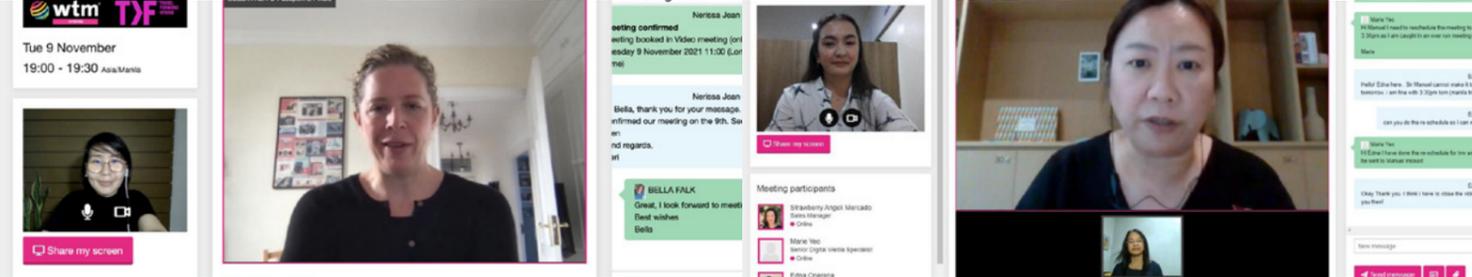
With the gradual easing of travel restrictions and the resumption of leisure travel across diverse local destinations, TPB and DOT are optimistic that the launching of the PMT will help kickstart domestic tourism and the local economy in the new normal as riders take the wheel in promoting Philippine tourist spots and helping local businesses and tour operators recover from the pandemic's effect on their livelihood.

Moreover, several DOT regional offices have included the development of motorcycle tourism circuits in the Cordilleras, Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley and Central Visayas.

Aris Ilagan of TopBikes, shared his regained enthusiasm to explore different parts of the country more freely once again on two wheels. “After being stuck indoors for so long, this is a welcome opportunity for the riding community. Being able to go wherever the wind takes us is very important for riders. For almost two years, we have limited opportunity to do it and now we are slowly and safely getting back to riding again,” stated Ilagan.

The PMT activities were conducted in accordance with the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) guidelines. Health and safety protocols were strictly observed during the event and only fully-vaccinated individuals were permitted to join on-site.





## World Travel Market 2021 Lays Groundwork for Philippine International Reopening

Over a year ago, the World Travel Market (WTM) 2020 took place online for the first time. The Philippine participation, organized by the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, saw 30 delegates representing 18 companies from the accommodation, travel agency, and tour operator sectors setting up meetings with their European counterparts to maintain the Philippine presence in the international travel and tourism arena.

Back then, the world was still slowly pivoting to the new normal. But this year, WTM decided to go hybrid with the theme “Reconnect. Rebuild. Innovate.” The event took place at the ExCel London from November 1-3 while the virtual version was held from November 8-9.

The Philippines was offered a 50-sqm space for its booth with twenty-five (25) stand sharer slots including five (5) allocations for the live event and twenty (20) slots for private sectors participating virtually. The theme “More Fun Awaits” came with cultural entertainment, serving of Filipino snacks, and distribution of goodie bags with Philippine-made items.

Aside from the live exhibition, London taxis were dressed to promote some of our famous destinations including the rice terraces of Banaue, the Chocolate Hills of Bohol, plus Cebu, Boracay, and Palawan for six months starting November 2021.

Additionally, speed networking, conferences, and business-to-business (B2B) meetings took place to establish and renew linkages with the European travel industry players, promote new travel circuits, and provide information on the safety protocols and procedures in place for tourists once the country reopens.

DOT Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat and TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones were present at the event, making it their first appearance at a major physical international travel gathering in pandemic times.

Secretary Puyat was also one of the panelists in the ministerial discussion on “Investing in Tourism’s Sustainable Future” to tackle, among others, the country’s readiness to host the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC) Global Summit from March 14-16, 2022.

WTM 2021 is just the start of great things to come for the Philippines. Our country’s participation was much-needed to continuously remind the world of the unparalleled beauty of our destinations. With most of our tourist destinations already catering to local travelers and tourism workers adapting to the challenges of the new normal, the country is expected to be ready once the gates finally reopen for international tourism.



## Philippines’ Grandest Food Festival in UAE Reimagines Traditional Filipino Cuisine with Exciting Twists

The Philippines invites the UAE’s diverse community of 200 nationalities to prepare their palates for a delightful new generation of Filipino cuisine in the country’s grandest food fiesta to date – the Philippines Food Festival.

Coinciding with the Expo 2020 Dubai, the Philippines Food Festival marks the biggest engagement of the country in presenting its food in a new light, with the opportunity to travel the Philippines’ kitchens and explore the country’s cuisine in one table.

UAE residents who are piqued with curiosity about contemporary Filipino food will taste generations of recipes handed down to families, where authenticity remains at the heart of every dish served.

PDTI Assistant Secretary and Philippines Expo 2020 Dubai Alternate Commissioner General Rosvi C. Gaetos highlighted that the Philippine Food Festival will shine the spotlight on the distinctiveness of Filipino food concepts, which sets it apart from the rest of Southeast Asia.

“Traditional Filipino kitchen has interwoven different culinary experiences from our interactions with different countries within our history that spans 4,000 years back. Fast forward to today, the Philippine Food Festival brings to light this amalgamation of cooking techniques applied on these specially-curated menu items, each given a modern-day twist by some of our finest Filipino chefs based here in the UAE,” said Gaetos.

Running from December 2021 to March 2022, the Philippines Food Festival will collaborate with dozens of restaurants, hotels, leading supermarkets and grocery stores, as well as the Bangkóta Philippines Pavilion’s very own ‘Mangrove Café. This event aims to entice global citizens to savor the culinary flavors of the Philippines through delicious Filipino dishes, and iconic food products shipped all the way from the Philippines.

Maria Anthonette C. Velasco Allones, Chief Operating Officer of the Philippines’ Tourism Promotions Board, inspires that this holistic approach of the Philippines Food Festival will serve as the country’s platform to exhibit some of its most popular dishes that the global community will feast on.

“We are bringing authentic Filipino food from the kitchens of

the Philippines directly to your tables here in Dubai and the rest of the UAE, in our efforts to establish the Philippines as the culinary centre of Southeast Asia. Our dedicated chefs from the Philippines who have mastered the art of giving traditional dishes a spark of innovative food craftsmanship without losing the same comforting taste will signal the beginning of an exciting new phase for Filipino cuisine,” said Velasco-Allones.

### Diverse offerings

The Philippines Food Festival has partnered with three hotels in Dubai and one in Abu Dhabi, which are expected to host peak numbers of guests from all over the world during the holiday and winter season in the UAE. By including Philippine dishes either as part of their buffet offering or in a set menu, these hotels will link the palates of foreign tourists to the plates of Philippine kitchens.

Partner hotels will serve specially curated menus by internationally-renowned and award-winning Filipino chef John Buenaventura, together with a group of Filipino culinary artists or siñeros, all working in the UAE’s hospitality industry.

In addition, Filipino-owned restaurants across the UAE will be concocting their special ‘Bangkóta’ menu out of their regular offerings. This will highlight their best Filipino dishes cooked with creativity and innovation to recreate traditional recipes passed down across several generations of Filipino ancestry.

The Philippines Food Festival, alongside the country’s annual participation in the UAE’s Gulfood exhibition, has also tapped leading supermarkets and grocery stores to feature ingredients and products shipped all the way from the Philippines. This initiative aims to encourage the public to create delicious, homemade Filipino food.

Lastly, the Mangrove Café located at the Philippines Pavilion will engage Expo 2020 Dubai visitors through a series of activities that will explore the distinct flavors of the country.

Participants and visitors of the Philippines Food Festival will get a chance to win exciting prizes, among them, a trip to some of the best destinations in the Philippines.

Article from: [filipinotimes.net](http://filipinotimes.net)



# TRAVEL TO THE PHILIPPINES, BOOK NOW!

PDOT Korea to Carry Out "Online Pre-Booking Campaign" with 7 Major Travel Agents



To keep pace with the "Living WITH COVID-19" era in November, the PDOT Korea, in collaboration with 7 major travel agents, has carried out an "Online Pre-Booking Campaign" for consumers who have completed their vaccinations to prepare for their upcoming travel to the Philippines.

The travel industry has been struggling in the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the campaign was established with the purpose of preparing new Philippine tour products by working with key travel agents and introducing these products to customers who are expecting to travel to the Philippines in the near future. Participating seven travel agents are (in alphabetical order) Bomulseom Tour, Hanjin Travel, Interpark Tour, Kyowon KRT, Very Good Tour, Web Tour, and YB Tour.

The major destinations for the new Philippine tour products are Bohol, Palawan, Boracay, Cebu, Clark, and Manila. Following health and safety protocols, this is only for fully inoculated Koreans and booking is valid for one year after the commencing of flights to product destinations. There is no additional charge for cancellation and rebooking. If required, the fees for visa process and RT-PCR test will also be included.

During the COVID-19 period, popular Philippine travel destinations have become more attractive for travelers as they are naturally cleaner. Based on the local situation, new and freshly planned Philippine tour products will be introduced through participating travel agents' online and social media channels, social commerce channels such as Coupang and WeMakePrice, and TV home shopping channels along with various benefits from each participating travel agent.

Maria Jorda-Apo, Tourism Director of PDOT Korea, said, "This pre-booking campaign was created to target the consumers who have expectations for a travel to the Philippines with 'Living With COVID-19' era. Through this 'Online Pre-Booking Campaign' with major travel agents, we will introduce attractive tour products of the Philippines that meet the new normal travel and lifestyle trends."

Meanwhile, in the case of Boracay, the vaccination rate is over 70%. The vaccination rate for travel industry workers, on the other hand, is over 90% and the daily number of confirmed cases is in the single digits. Bohol also has a high inoculation rate for its travel industry workers and is accelerating preparations to welcome global travelers with single-digit daily confirmed cases.



# PDOT Osaka Wraps-Up Educational Seminars with Prominent Players Designed to Give Exposure to Stakeholders

The PDOT Osaka wrapped up its series of webinars covering 6 topics over a span of 3.5 months. From the Source webinar is a collaboration with ECC Center, Japan's number one language center with over 188 language centers across the nation. It became a prominent ESL player for the Philippines when it introduced the family ESL package.

Dubbed in Japanese language, the series covered topics including niche products, ESL, dive and food tourism. Special episodes on Cebu, Bohol, and Palawan for private viewing of travel trade were hosted by our national carriers. The Cebu Association of Tour Operators (CATO) took center stage giving a brief on suggested tour products on top of the institutional products which dominated the market for close to a decade. Also featured were nature-based products and outdoor experiences under the new norm.

Following closely was a comprehensive presentation of various tourism circuits by Palawan Tourism Council President, Mr. Felix Rafols. The presentation was complemented with the Guide to the Philippines information on Coron and Busuanga.

Meanwhile, the Long Stay Foundation introduced wellness for its webinar. The foundation also provided an overview of the retirement industry, the foundation's support system and recommendations for sustainability of the program as well as the Philippine competitiveness. Additionally, Philippine Authority representative, Ms. Noehl Dalao-Bautista, gave a comprehensive brief on the Philippine special retirement visa.

The dive webinar partnered with three Japanese dive operators that featured key dive destinations in Cebu (Balicasag, Malapascua, Mactan and Moalboal) and neighboring Bohol. Joining the roster of speakers was Ms. Roni Ben-Aharon of Atlantis Hotel who presented the dive landscape of Dumaguete.

Capping these 6 topics was an educational seminar on MICE and career-oriented and life learning ESL programs during the 2nd JATA Online Travel Mart. PDOT Osaka announced its ambition to renew efforts to develop ESL bubbles and encouraged participants to think out of the box and create certification training events such as studycation for the long summer months.

The new Attaché said, "PDOT Osaka introduced the dubbed webinar for next year with the Meta boom. It's time to reinvent how we bring updates to our partners on demand. To initiate this, PDOT Osaka launched the FB channel for the travel trade where contents will be geared for our agents. In doing so, we shortcut the reboot period. PDOT Osaka will concentrate on the travel trade to complement the digital initiatives of PDOT Tokyo designed for consumers. We have to think like a sales person!"





## TPB Regional Travel Fair - Zamboanga Caps-Off 2021 with Resounding Success

**P**roactive mindset and seamless collaboration with local industry stakeholders defined the recently concluded 8th Regional Travel Fair (RTF) featuring Zamboanga Peninsula.

Held at the Grand Astoria Hotel, Zamboanga City from December 2 to 5, 2021, the event saw the participation of 44 sellers from various regions, majority of whom are from Region 9, and 89 buyers from different parts of the country engaging in B2C (business-to-consumer) tourism activities that generated an estimated Php37.7M worth of sales.

The RTF capitalized on technology for the marketing and promotions of popular and emerging tourism products and destinations by enabling a hybrid format that's in line with new normal health and safety protocols.



*"While so much has changed these past two years, TPB's Regional Travel Fair remains committed to bring everyone back together to experience safe and responsible adventures so that travelers can enjoy the breathtaking sights and sounds that Mindanao offers,"* said TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones.

### ON HALAL, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, and TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY

300 participants joined the tourism webinars which featured a curated line-up of industry stakeholders from both public and private sectors who shared their insights, ideas, and inspirations on building a more gender-balanced, resilient, and sustainable travel industry and bridging the gender equality gap in terms of workforce, pay, and leadership positions in tourism.

Speakers included Bambike Founder Bryan Benitez McClelland for "Sustainable Tourism: Making it Beautiful"; S.M.I.L.E.S Specialist and Consultant Apple Allison for "Gender Trends in Philippines' Tourism Destination"; Department of Tourism (DOT) - Tourism Planning Undersecretary Myra Paz Valderrosa-Abubakar for "Halal Tourism: Muslim-Friendly Tourism Project"; and DOT-Region IX Officer-in-Charge Wenceslao Galeza for the latest Regional Tourism Updates from the Zamboanga Peninsula.

### DYNAMIC TRAVEL EXCHANGES

The whole day hybrid Business-to-Business sessions on December 3 brought together local tourism enterprises at just the right time for Zamboanga City's status downgrade to COVID-19 Alert level 2. The gathering generated a total of 5,179 business card exchanges in relation to the latest Philippine tourism offerings in both virtual and onsite settings.

The networking sessions ran back-to-back with virtual presentations of the LGUs on tourist destinations and activities to enjoy in Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga City, Isabela City, Dipolog City, Dapitan City, Pagadian City, and Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay.

A lot of buyers were enthused in the various offerings of the peninsula, including the colorful products of the local weaving communities. RTF showcased a live demonstration of featured artisans from the Kumalarang Weaves, Zamsulu Artworks, Angie's Yakan Handloom Weaving, and Tuwas Yakan Weavers.

Online viewers also went on a gastronomic journey featuring Halal cuisine through the cooking demonstrations of Dennis Coffee Garden and Alavar Restaurant that featured the must-try dishes of the region mainly "Tiula Itum" and "Curacha con Salsa de Alavar" respectively.

TPB previously organized the first hybrid edition of the RTF dubbed "Infinite Escapes: Eastern Visayas" in Summit Hotel, Tacloban City last August 4-8 which generated a combined Php45.5 million sales leads and direct sales from B2B and B2C sessions.

# PHL 3D BOOTH AWARDED MOST UNIQUE AT 28TH TRAVEL TOUR EXPO

**T**he Most Unique Booth was awarded to the Philippines during the closing of the 28th Travel Tour Expo (TTE) held at the SM Megamall Megatrade Hall last November 7, 2021. Presented by the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, the booth featured a 3D video mapping of the Fort Santiago in Intramuros, Manila following its recognition as Asia's leading tourist attraction at the World Travel Awards 2020.

TPB's participation in the TTE is in consonance with the objective of the TPB Membership Program which fosters strong collaboration and partnership with the private sector and tourism stakeholders in marketing the Philippines as a premier tourist destination as well as promoting the country as a center for domestic and international meetings, incentives, conventions, exhibitions, sports, medical tourism and other special events. The said program also provides a platform to build business, insights, network, and brand for its members.



Organized by the Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA), the three-day TTE was conceptualized to help jumpstart the recovery of Philippine tourism with the theme "Step into the Future, Yes to New Adventures." The said expo featured 40 exhibitors representing a cross-section of the Philippine tourism industry and national tourism organizations and embassies.



Centering on the old entrance of the walled city, the booth projected a visually striking and realistic view of destinations in each region through the use of the latest technology in experiential marketing. With loads of creativity and fervor to innovate, TPB's 3D projection mapping displayed an immersive experience with its large visuals of landmarks and popular tourism sites.



"I know that Filipinos will continue to have that thirst for new experiences in new places. I know those travel enthusiasts have more bucket lists to check off. And there's no better way to serve them opportunities to do so than the biggest travel trade event in the country," said PTAA President Michelle Taylan.

PTAA's annual TTE is considered as the country's biggest annual travel and tourism event since 1994 where its members and the public can score huge deals on flights, accommodations, tour packages and other leisure activities. Its 27th edition in February 2020 was attended by a total number of 68,429 visitors.

TPB also did a back-to-back showcase of El Nido, Palawan which emerged as 2020's Travel+Leisure's Best Island in the World. In addition, Palawan landed a spot in the annual Conde Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Award as one of the top islands to visit in 2021.



# PHILTOA RESUMES PHYSICAL EVENT FOR PHILIPPINE TRAVEL MART

The Philippine Tour Operators Association (PHILTOA) resumed physical staging of its annual Philippine Travel Mart (PTM) after its short stint online last year.



The PTM is the longest-running travel trade exhibition in the Philippines organized by PHILTOA, a non-stock and non-profit organization of hotels, resorts, transportation companies and other tourism-oriented establishments actively involved in the advocacy of responsible tourism.



Now on its 32nd year, the PTM was organized in partnership with the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB). It was aimed to encourage and continue the momentum growth of domestic travel by allowing traveling consumers to directly book and buy exclusive promotional holiday packages, airfare deals, accommodations and other travel-related services.



The PTM was held with the theme “FUNdemic of Safe and Travel Experience” and followed the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) guidelines on safety protocols as mandated by the Department of Tourism (DOT). It featured a total of 53 exhibitors from local government units, tour operators, accommodation and other tourism establishments, each promoting reopened destinations and discount travel package deals up to 70% off regular price.



Past winners and contenders staged lively performances of cultural dances, Himig ng Kundiman, Patimpalak ng Kasuotang Pilipino, and Eco-chorale. TPB's latest interactive tourism-based game Travel Bingo Season 2 also hyped up the crowd with domestic travel prizes as part of the event's promotion of Philippine culture and destinations.

The PTM ran from November 26-28, 2021 and was open to fully vaccinated public at the SMX Convention Center, Pasay City.



# KAIN NA!

Makes a Comeback in Tagaytay

TAGAYTAY CITY — As part of its continuing efforts to revive the country's local food tourism scene, the Department of Tourism (DOT) in partnership with Ayala Malls brought another hybrid staging of the KAIN NA! Food and Travel Festival from December 9 to 12, 2021 at the Ayala Serin Mall in Tagaytay City, Cavite.

“Centuries later, various parts of the world have also come to know Filipino cuisine through the palates and creativity of the Filipino diaspora, who have introduced our unique flavor profiles, regional cuisines, and ingredients in a myriad of innovative and interesting ways,” said Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat.

This edition of KAIN NA! is dubbed “Travelling Flavors,” which is a nod to the quinquennial celebrations in the Philippines, particularly toward the Galleon Trade which facilitated the meeting and melding of eastern and western flavors, ingredients, and cooking techniques that have left an indelible mark on the Filipino culinary landscape.

“While inbound tourism remains restricted at the moment, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the presence of continuing discussions on Filipino flavors and food tourism experiences remain among the best ways to keep the Philippines in the hearts and minds of tourists and travelers, whom we shall welcome with a burst of fun flavors once the situation safely allows,” Puyat added.



DOT Region IV-A OIC-Director Marites Castro, Undersecretary Myra Paz V. Abubakar, Undersecretary Woodrow C. Maquiling, Jr., Undersecretary Edwin R. Enrie, Nanyang Pilipino Foundation Executive Director Gertrudes Duran-Batacabe, Tourism Officer Provincial Tourism Office of Cavite Rochelle Bowalan and Armin Arañas, Tagaytay Tourism officer Jarryd Bello, Ayala Malls General Manager Tina De Asis, and Ayala Mall Serin Marketing Manager Jeanette Gonzales graced the ceremonial ribbon cutting.



A total of 11 physical booths were mounted for the activity, each promoting a unique product and service of food and farm tourism stakeholders across the country.

This run of the KAIN NA! also brought back its signature food webinars, namely Global Perspectives, Food Tourism Exchange, and Food Tourism 101, as well as three virtual symposia, which tackled cultural influences in the food and gastronomy of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

**This year's KAIN NA featured the ff. exhibitors:**

- Muntinlupa City Women Producers Cooperative and My Little Oven By Simplicity from the National Capital Region (NCR)
- Provincial Government of Ilocos Sur (Region 1)
- Duran Farm and Myriad Farm (Region III)
- Farmshare Agri Tourism Park and Uma Verde Econature Farm Inc. (Region 4A)
- Caramay Coffee Planters and MerIs Native Delicacies (Region 4B)
- Mediodia's Delicacies and Nanay Patring Recipe & Asia Pacific Aqua Marine, Inc. (Region 6)
- Lamac Multi-Purpose Cooperative (Region 7)
- Jane's Food Products (Region 9)
- Alameda Farm (CARAGA)

Among the speakers were award winning chefs and restaurateurs Jessica Gonzales of Bobi Filipino Food based in Paris, France, Chele Gonzalez of Gallery by Chele, 2019 James Beard Awardee for Best Chef (Mid-Atlantic) Tom Cunanan, Carlo Lamagna, chef-owner of modern Filipino restaurant – Magna, in Portland, Oregon and Christina Sunae, chef-owner of Cocina Sunae, Sunae Asian Cantina in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Alfie Escabarte and Carmelita Escabarte, Co-Founders of Thrilla in Manila.

KAIN NA! business-to-business meetings also linked up Food Tourism Consortium members and CALABARZON stakeholders.

# PH CITED ASIA'S TOP BEACH AND DIVE DESTINATION ANEW IN 2021 WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS

The Philippines is, once again, Asia's leading beach destination and Asia's leading dive destination at the 28th World Travel Awards (WTA).



"We are elated that the country's pristine beaches and mesmerizing dive spots have once again been cited as the best in Asia by the prestigious 2021 World Travel Awards. We share this recognition with our tourism stakeholders, local government units, partner agencies, and all Filipinos who have been helping us promote our country's attractions, products, and culture," said Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat.



This is the Philippines' fifth time to win Asia's Leading Beach Destination and the third time in a row since 2019 to win the Asia's Leading Dive Destination award.

The WTA aims to acknowledge, reward, and celebrate excellence across all sectors of the global travel and tourism industry.

"This will boost our efforts to keep the Philippines as a top-of-mind destination for foreign tourists as we await the resumption of international leisure travel to the country, consistent with our "More Fun Awaits" global campaign," said Puyat.

Some of the country's top beach destinations, such as Boracay in Aklan, Siargao in Surigao del Norte, and El Nido and Amanpulo in Palawan, have already opened to domestic tourists and are ready to welcome foreign tourists once international borders reopen.



Moreover, the PDOT has developed many of the country's beach destinations, as well as new and existing dive circuits and is constantly identifying potential destinations that may be developed for dive tourism. Top diving spots in the country include the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in Palawan, Anilao in Batangas, Malapascua and Moalboal in Cebu, Balicasag, Panglao and Anda in Bohol, and Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro.

The Department also ensures that the safety of visitors remain is prioritized with the strict implementation of health protocols in destinations that have opened their doors to guests. Meanwhile, more than half or about 65.53% of tourism workers in the country have already received their Covid-19 jabs as of October 16.

For more updates and information on the DOT's campaigns and programs, please visit [www.morefunawaits.com](http://www.morefunawaits.com).

Reference: DOT OPAA

## DOT EARNS UNWTO CITATION FOR

# HAVE A SAFE TRIP

## PINAS AD

For the second time this year, the Philippines emerged as winner in a competition organized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat on December 10, 2021 announced that the Department of Tourism's (DOT) Have A Safe Trip, Pinas was hailed as one of the Exceptional Stories of Sustainable Tourism in the 2021 UNWTO Tourism Video Competition.

"We are proud that the video produced by the Department made it to this prestigious competition. More importantly, we were able to show how tourism provides jobs and livelihoods while conveying our message of traveling safely," said Puyat.

The competition was launched by the UNWTO ahead of its 24th General Assembly, and was designed to recognize the best visual storytellers from every global region.

Video entries were judged based on two categories: "Tourism and the Decade of Action", which shows how the tourism sector is advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through references to one or several of the 17 Global Goal; and "Exceptional Stories of Sustainable Tourism", which shows remarkable examples that showcase the human

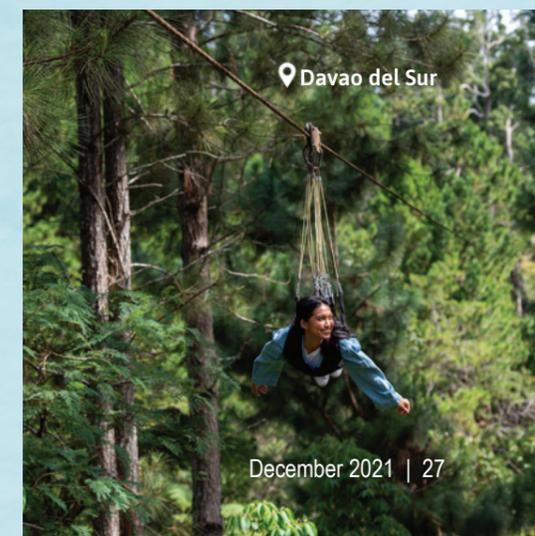
face of tourism and make clear the positive social impact the sector can have through generating opportunities for all.

The Have A Safe Trip, Pinas video was presented by the UNWTO competition as one of the Exceptional Stories of Sustainable Tourism, specifically for the Asia and the Pacific region. (Read the full story: <https://www.unwto.org/news/2021-unwto-tourism-videocompetition-winners>)

Launched in November 2020, the DOT's ad showed how travelling amidst the pandemic can still be safe and fun while highlighting the community benefits of tourism, featuring workers from Boracay Island—the first tourist destination in the Philippines to open since the pandemic—whose jobs and livelihoods were restored when local leisure travel resumed. (Watch the video: <https://youtu.be/g4MeGdMHs90>)

Last week, the UNWTO also accorded Brgy. Bojo in Aloguinsan, Cebu with the Best Tourism Village Award in its pilot programme that recognized 44 villages from 32 countries for their natural and cultural resources, and innovative and transformative actions and commitment to tourism development aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Reference: DOT OPAA





# Brgy. Bojo in Aloguinsan, Cebu Bags UNWTO Best Tourism Village Award

**M**ADRID, Spain—With tourism promotion among local communities bearing fruit, a local suburb bagged the Best Tourism Village Award from the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat expressed her elation with the latest development, recognizing the "remarkable work" of the local community in Bojo through the Bojo Aloguinsan Ecotourism Association or BAETAS and the strong support of the municipality of Aloguinsan.

"A local destination being inducted into the UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Program in its pilot year is a testament to the Philippines' commitment to sustainable tourism development from the national level down to the grassroots," said Puyat.

"The wealth of our natural resources and unmatched hospitality remains our key strength as we strive for the reopening of the industry to international travelers anchored on the principle of safe and sustainable tourism," she added.

Tourism Officer-in-Charge-Undersecretary Verna Buensuceso and Philippine Ambassador to Spain Philippe Jones Lhuiller received the award in Madrid on December 2 (Thursday) on behalf of the Philippines.

The UNWTO's pilot initiative recognized 44 villages from 32 countries that stood out for their natural and cultural resources as well as for their innovative and transformative

actions and commitment to tourism development in line with the sustainable development goals or SDG.

Likewise, the said program has been launched to advance the role of tourism as a tool for rural development—with its aim to value and safeguard rural villages along with their associated landscapes and knowledge systems among others.

Bojo is famous for its river, hills, underwater natural resources, mangroves, birds and responsible locals with the Bojo River Eco-Cultural Tour as its main tourism activity—managed by the BAETAS.

BAETAS provides an eco-cultural river tour with mangrove ecology, bird and wildlife lectures—the profit from which were shared among the local government, community fund, barangay fund as well as the wages and payment to its suppliers.

The said Tour was ranked by Green Destinations among the Top 100 Global Sustainable Destinations in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Further, Brgy. Tenani in the Province of Samar has been selected to participate in the UNWTO's Upgrade Programme of the Best Tourism Villages—receiving the Organization's support in improving elements of the areas identified as gaps in the evaluation process.

Reference: DOT OPAA

# INTRAMUROS MONUMENTS DECLARED AS NATIONAL CULTURAL TREASURES

Credit: Intramuros Administration



Denison Manual - DOT Media

In a ceremony held at Plaza Roma on November 19, the National Museum of the Philippines (NMP) turned over to the Intramuros Administration (IA) four bronze markers declaring the monuments to Charles IV, Andá, Isabel II, and Legazpi-Urdaneta as National Cultural Treasures (NCT).

Department of Tourism - Philippines Secretary and IA Chairperson Bernadette Romulo Puyat signed the turn-over documents and unveiled the markers, together with IA Administrator Guillier B. Asido, National Museum of the Philippines Director-General Jeremy Barns, Spanish Ambassador Jorge Moragas Sanchez and Mexican Ambassador Gerardo Lozano.

In attendance were representatives of the IA Board of Administrators, namely: Deputy Treasurer of the Philippines Gisella Lood; Department of Justice Asst. Secretary Nicholas Ty; National Economic and Development Authority Asst. Secretary Carlos Bernardo O. Abad Santos; Metro Manila Development Authority Deputy Chairperson

Frisco San Juan, Jr.; Department of Public Works and Highways South Manila District Engineer Mikunug Macud; and City of Manila's Bartolome "Barbie" Atienza. San Agustin Museum Director Fr. Ricky Villar, O.S.A. delivered the Invocation. Also present were Instituto Cervantes Director Javier Galvan, Nayong Pilipino Foundation Exec. Dir. Gertie Batocabe, and National Parks Devt. Committee Dep. Exec. Dir. Jezreel Apelar.

A National Cultural Treasure is defined under RA 10066 as "a unique cultural property found locally, possessing outstanding historical, cultural, artistic and/or scientific value which is highly significant and important to the country and nation." Other Intramuros NCTs are Fort Santiago and the entirety of the walls and fortifications.

**#WEAREINTRAMUROS**

# REBUILD PH TOURISM INITIATIVES

Guest Contributor: Pia Allones



**W**ho wouldn't miss being able to go outside and enjoy the relaxation or thrills life brings whenever one would unwind by the beach or explore the depths of the ocean? With the help of people such as Mr. Tres Fenix III, the general manager and president of Cebu-based travel agency, Hello PH!, you'd surely be in good company as you explore the top tourist destinations across the Visayan region. This was, of course, before

the pandemic struck. And with no tourists in sight, he had to find solutions for his company and his team to survive the pandemic.

Mr. Tres' mixed background of marine education, economics, hospitality, and hotel service experience led him to pursue business in the tourism industry. It was his dream to preserve the Philippine environment and to make it an international sanctuary while promoting tourism. He noted that with our pristine beaches and beautiful coral reefs, our country was sure to attract tourists which in turn would provide economic opportunities for our compatriots.

By also being a tour operator, he greets foreigners and teaches them how to properly use and take care of the beach during their trips. As he expressed, "You cannot separate the economic activity that needs to be done and protect the environment, so you get in the middle."

With a team composed of eight members and full-time tour guides, he reaped the fruits of his hard work. But as the pandemic led to continuous lockdowns, he was left with three full-time employees and one part-time staff as the others made their own personal and informed decisions to go home to their families.

Eventually, the time came for him to overcome challenges that came his way and to thrive in these unprecedented times together with his remaining staff who wanted to continue working at Hello PH!

One of the biggest challenges Mr. Tres faced was his travel agency not being able to operate in the pandemic due to the Department of Trade and Industry's classification of businesses. They were only able to go back to their office in August 2020.

Moreover, another challenge was taking care of his staff so that they would remain calm and continuously operate despite the uncertainty they faced. Lastly, preparing his staff mentally for the pandemic was his primary concern. He wanted to make everyone feel safe by explaining the science behind the virus and sharing good sanitation protocols. These were what he tackled all throughout this time as he looked at what course of action to take for his team to survive the effects of the pandemic on their livelihoods.

In the early stages of the community quarantine when everyone thought that this would last only three months or so, Mr. Tres was able to foresee that tourism would possibly be severely affected and would be closed for more than a year. His staff was also made aware of this possibility as they were not allowed to service tourists.

Mr. Tres instructed his staff to call up their hotel partners, transportation services, and local activity providers from Dumaguete, Dauin, and Boracay, among others, to check up on the people from their destinations. He wanted to see how they were doing and assist the stakeholders of his business.

At this time, what was happening to the different destinations of the Philippines and the impact on tourism were not well-known. According to Mr. Tres, "Palawan was almost zero. Dumaguete and Dauin were already zero as Dumaguete and Bohol were suffering already in terms of tourism." Nobody knew what to do as everything was closing down and it was hard to reach out for assistance.

The possibility of not being able to remain open, continue operating, or make income was real and disheartening.

With this, he asked his staff what they wanted to do. He was aware that his team was capable of working at home because of their digital transformation. At the same time, they expressed their concerns about what others were going through and wanted to figure out how to help since everyone was affected. They continued calling hotels and coming up with plans to find solutions on how to pursue work opportunities and generate income during the community quarantine with no clients to serve.



*"That was how we started our pandemic lockdown. Asking ourselves, how do we help the tourism workers survive the pandemic? Because sila ang mawawalan ng trabaho (Because they are the ones who will lose their jobs). That's why we did not feel too scared or down because looking back, we had a good goal. That was what kept us busy."*

And with that, the Rebuild PH Tourism Initiative was put into action by Mr. Tres and Hello PH! It was what motivated them during this difficult time as it aimed to help the tourism workers survive the pandemic.

Their current objectives include how to help tourism businesses restart, sustain, and rebuild. As Mr. Tres said, "If we do that, they'll be the ones to help the individual tourism workers."

With six current initiatives on this new project founded by Mr. Tres, he was able to respond to the plight of Hello PH's partners. For tourism businesses, the Tuloy Parin Tayo! Store serves as an avenue to sell products and goods for the benefit of tourism workers. Alongside this function, people are also able to reserve hotel rooms, transportation transfers, airline flights, and entrance tickets as a dignifying promise to travel and tourism workers that tourists will soon avail of their services in the near future using advanced purchases. By supporting tourism businesses, one is helping tourism workers while securing their future travels!

*Pia Allones is a writer who enjoys fun dives and is a multi-awarded ballet and jazz dancer. She recently won 1st place in two categories, solo ballet and contemporary trio while 3rd place for solo jazz and lyrical in the recent All Dance World Hybrid.*

# RIDERS AND THEIR ROUTES

Motorcycle enthusiasts of all stripes on why they love riding and what scenic spots are best seen from the back of a bike

Aside from that, clients would eventually make calls and requests over the pandemic for international driving permits as that was one of the services they offered. Even if they were not receiving too many customers, Mr. Tres wanted to make ends meet for everyone and to make their experiences as bearable as possible as they all dealt with the pandemic. “By not thinking about [the discouraging news] too much, [the Rebuild Ph Tourism Initiatives] happened and it helped us out,” he exclaimed.

“If you redefine things properly, then you’ll see new ways of looking at it and solutions come out.”

- Mr. Tres

In the end, he expressed how he saw several silver linings to the adversities he had experienced. For instance, despite the reduced staff, the capacity of his company to do things is now greater than pre-pandemic level thanks to the aid of technology, which he’s grateful to have access to.

He also witnessed how the playing field was equalized as new entrepreneurs can now enter the industry without the usual roadblocks. The ideas and innovations of younger staff are also heard more in larger companies as new options are needed from everyone to thrive in this new age.

“We were able to get out of the corporate rat race and if things go back to normal, it would be proven that I don’t have to go to the office everyday,” said Mr. Tres. He was certainly grateful that, on top of it all, he can still do his office tasks at home, which would mean that he could still spend enough time with his family.

One of his most thought-provoking silver linings was the shift of perspective on what is important in his life or, in general, for society as a whole. He was happy when he had food on his table and was with his loved ones. He was even able to spend more time with his family and newborn son on a daily basis as they break the norm of long work hours away from home.

Throughout his experiences, Mr. Tres wishes for people to have a cheerful mind. “If people have a cheerful mind, if their minds are in the right place and they help each other, there’s nothing we can’t solve together,” he said.

From not being allowed to operate up until initiating his new project, Mr. Tres’ inspiring work in the tourism industry tells a story of reimagining and rebuilding the possibilities for Philippine tourism despite the setbacks of the pandemic. He is certain that by working and coping together, we can provide what is best at the moment for everybody involved in the tourism industry. Mr. Tres’ story is truly one of tenacity, resilience, and compassion for all.



The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines kickstarted the Philippine Motorcycle Tourism (PMT) program in November 2021 to encourage motorcycle enthusiasts to engage in motorcycle sports tourism activities.

Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) player LA Tenorio got into motorcycling to try something new after spending so much time on the hardcourt. He didn’t expect to fall in love with it, but he did. Now, the playmaker owns three motorcycles—a BMW GS 1200, a BMW R nineT Option 719, and a Vespa Primavera 150—each used in different ways.

“Pang-long drive ko yung GS ko. Nag-Baguio na ako na yun ang gamit dahil comfortable siya. Kakain lang ako ng breakfast sa Manor then babalik na ako sa Manila. Nasa bahay na ako by five o’clock ng hapon. Pero pag short ride lang pa-Clark or Tagaytay, I use my R nineT,” he shares.

LA even started vlogging about his riding adventures with actors Hyubs Azarcon and Zanjoe Marudo. According to LA, motorcycling helped him realize that it really is more fun in the Philippines.



Jericho Rosales and Paulo Avelino are just as enthusiastic about riding. Jericho usually travels with a crew called “The Brap Pack”, which includes Drew Arellano, Paolo Abrera, and Ryan Agoncillo, among others.

The Brap Pack has been all over the Philippines. They rode to Aurora; Quezon; Bacnotan, La Union; Carmona, Cavite; and Mabalacat, Pampanga, where they checked out the Clark International Speedway. They’ve even taken their motorcycles to the US and sped down the Pacific Coast Highway, the best way to see the California coast.

Motorcycling isn’t just for the boys, though. There are plenty of amazing female riders in town, including actresses Ella Cruz, Sarah Lahbati, and Yassi Pressman. Showbiz veteran Eula Valdes has also been known to join group rides every once in a while.

The female riders’ group LaQwachicas holds such rides for women who are interested in motorcycling. According to its founder Rica Sison, they sometimes set off without a specific destination in mind.

“Ang ganda pala talaga ng Pilipinas! Dati, tuwing off-season ng PBA, iisipin namin mangibang bansa. Pero ngayon alam na namin na we don’t even have to leave the country para makakita ng magagandang tanawin at makapag-relax

LA isn’t the only one who enjoys seeing the country on two wheels. Former Senator JV Ejercito has always been an advocate of motorcycle tourism. His own rides have taken him all the way to Ambuklao Dam in Benguet and Villa VITALIS in Santiago, Ilocos Sur.

For JV, riding is all about rediscovering his own backyard. Whether it’s good food, vibes, or views, he strongly believes the Philippines has it all. He says riders have a responsibility to shine a light on the country’s scenic spots in the hope of getting more people to visit them, in line with the TPB’s goal of helping local businesses and tour operators bounce back from the impact of the COVID-19 through motorcycle tourism.

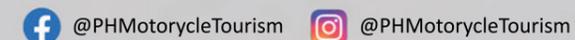
“Bigla na lang kaming maghahanap ng iba pang mapupuntahan habang nasa daan pa kami. Kaya masaya sa riding kasi kapag naka-kotse ka, medyo mahirap gumalaw. Maghahanap ka ng parking space, et cetera. Pag naka-motor ka kasi, madali sa ‘yo ang lahat. You can park anywhere, then go off on foot to explore

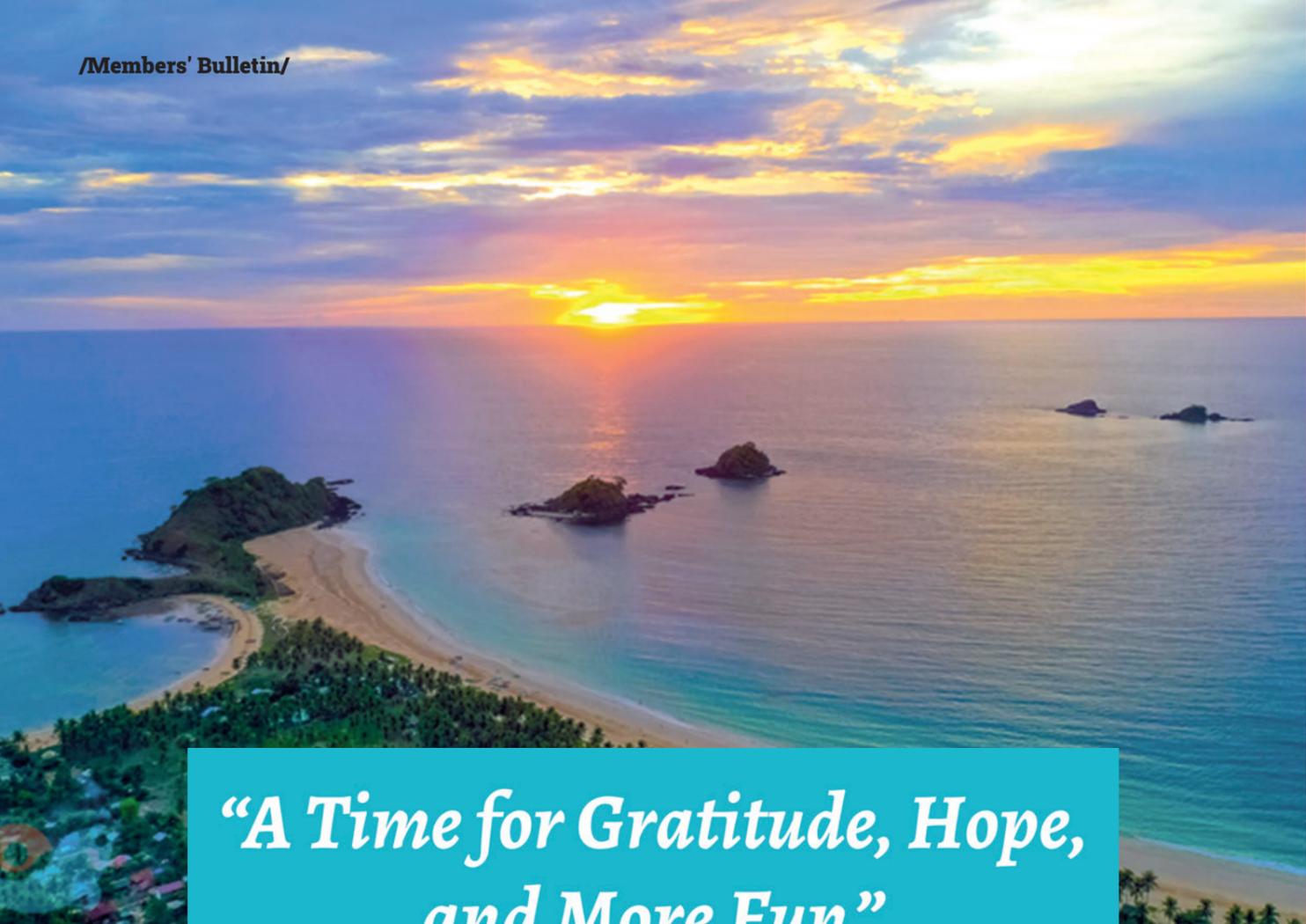
“Kaming mga riders, alam namin ang mga magagandang lugar at masasarap na kainan. We share online yung discoveries namin, mga hidden treasures, para pag makita ng iba, pupuntahan din nila

The LaQwachicas go where the wind takes them. Rica says the farthest they’ve gone is La Union, but she hopes to take them to Baguio, the Ilocos Region (especially Vigan), and even Mindoro, by way of RORO or roll-on, roll-off ferry boats that transport vehicles across water. Although the ongoing pandemic put a damper on her plans, Rica’s still intent on pushing through with them as soon as the situation improves.

“Excited na kami mag-schedule ng group rides. Ang maganda pa dun, pag nakita kami ng mga tao, they’ll realize na bukas na ulit ang mga daan. We can help encourage others to get on a motorcycle and tour the country,” she says.

To know more about the program, visit Philippine Motorcycle Tourism’s official accounts:





# “A Time for Gratitude, Hope, and More Fun”

What gratitude shows us is when life goes well as what we expect it to be, gratitude gives us the reason to celebrate and intensify the goodness.

Here comes the big question, but what about when life goes dreadfully? Amidst crises that latch onto not only our country but the whole wide world, the question that is often asked is if people should feel appreciative under such menacing circumstances.

Gratitude is essential. Admittedly, it is exactly under crisis situations like the pandemic that we are experiencing now when we have the most advantage acquired by a grateful perspective on life.

However, being grateful is a choice, a triumphant way of thinking that tolerates and is somewhat insusceptible to the favorable and unfavorable events that flow in and out of our lives. When catastrophic events strike, gratitude gives a viewpoint from which we can outlook on life in its totality and not be engulfed by momentary occurrences.

In order to grow our way out of this hole, we must instill gratitude and hope in each and

everyone of us. Grateful and hopeful on how to maximize on what we have, from white sand beaches, heritage towns and monuments, mountains, rainforests, adventures, islands and diving spots are among the country's most popular tourist attractions because of our rich biodiversity and its more fun in the Philippines.

We efficiently used the luxury time we have on planning on how to lure back visitors while avoiding new outbreaks of infection. The country took this opportunity to be grateful and hopeful in rebuilding the tourism sector by aiding the players' upskill and digitalization, redefining the way they do business, and guaranteeing compliance with safety and health standards.

Through combined efforts and hardwork of visitors and sectors, the country has a bigger chance to regrow the tourism sector. With the country's renewed commitment, we can be assured that the tourism industry will accomplish better success after and even during this pandemic.

*CSP Travel and Tours, Inc. is a Japanese-owned travel & tour agency in Cebu since 2018*



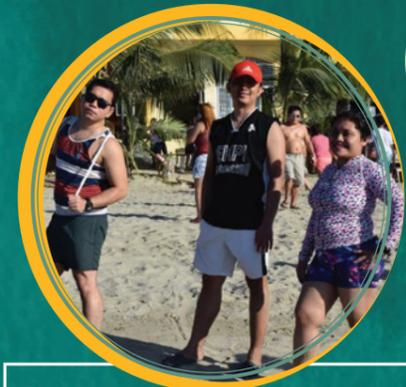
# IT'S ALWAYS MORE FUN WITH YOU

Following the success of the “It's More Fun with You” campaign that encourages Filipinos to travel and explore the country again after a long hiatus due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic, we have asked some of our colleagues in TPB about their future travel plans and whom they want to spend it with. Here are their responses:



My future travel plan is to revisit Sagada Mountain Province along with my family once local borders are open for domestic tourism. People often argue whether the beach or the mountains are the best relaxation place. As for me, I'm a mountain person. In addition, my mom just recovered from cancer and I would love to start travelling with her again and show her the best of the Philippines. That is my only wish, spend more time with my family and explore the Philippines again.

– Morris Basilan, The Americas Division



My friends in grad school and I are very much looking forward to our long overdue out of town getaway. When this pandemic is over and leisure travel is allowed, we'll be catching up on each other's experiences perhaps around a bonfire while enjoying the outdoors and scenery of Guimaras and Siargao.

– NJ Rafer, Management Information System Department



Since the pandemic started, we have never gotten the chance to go on vacation. So if given a chance, I would like to bring my daughter to Bohol so she can see a tarsier in person.

– Jameson Caranza, Marketing Communications Department



This April, my one and only grandson Hugo will celebrate his second birthday. He was born just when the pandemic was starting so he did not get to celebrate his first birthday with the usual children's party. Hopefully things will continue to normalize this year so we can go to Misibis Bay with Hugo's mom and dad together with my wife and daughter. This will be my return visit to Misibis after the first one back in 2014 and I'm sure it will be more fun this time with the new additions to the family.

– Art Gatus, Corporate Planning and Business Development Department



# TOURISM HEROES

As 2021 comes to an end, the TPB pays tribute to our tourism frontliners whose heroic efforts and sacrifices in serving our tourists and travelers affirmed the Filipino brand of service through the pandemic years. We take pride in journeying with them through the lockdowns and the gradual reopening of tourism destinations. Their individual resilience and sustained optimism truly inspired us to persevere through our adversity, and pivot positively to the next normal for tourism and travel. We want to let them know that they are appreciated, every day.

For the T'boli tribe, dancing holds the story of their identity; a reflection of their rich culture, heritage, and environment which have been preserved throughout generations. With every profound step and meaningful moment, T'boli dancers continue to perform to ensure that their traditions will continue to thrive amidst the challenges of the current times.



👤 T'boli Dancers  
📍 Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, Mindanao



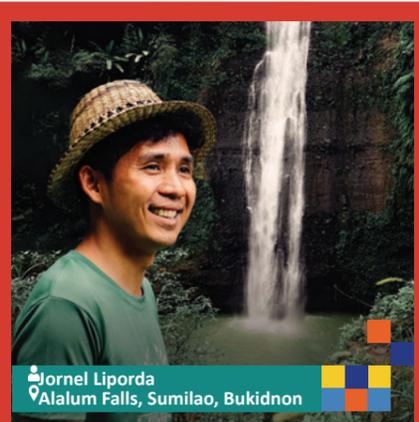
👤 Wilma Contero Tagoloanen  
📍 Bukidnon

After sunset in Malaybalay, Bukidnon, the women of Tagoloanen families lead the sacred practice of weaving sleeping mats. Wilma Contero, one of the tribe elders, weaves the ikam, or banig, using sodsod (a type of grass harvested, sun-dried, dyed and flattened before being used) to create patterns that reflect the identity of the Tagoloanen. To further enrich and safeguard this tradition, the Tagoloanen Women Weavers Association (TWWA) was established. Despite the odds and the pandemic, these women continue to strongly advocate for the beauty of their weaving to transcend through generations.

Cloud 9 in Siargao was once an almost roadless area where work had been scarce for the locals. Laida Escoltura, born and raised in the island, held onto determination and resourcefulness as she and her husband turned their popular homecooked recipes into sought-after meals for both locals and travelers. When Cloud 9 transformed into a popular tourist destination, the lives of the locals were also uplifted as the influx of guests boosted the local economy. As travel restrictions gradually ease up, Laida looks forward to serving her heartfelt meals to more visitors, again.



👤 Laida Escoltura  
📍 Cloud 9, Siargao



👤 Jornel Liporda  
📍 Alalum Falls, Sumilao, Bukidnon

Jornel Liporda is the most trusted tour guide and caretaker of Alalum Falls, which is right in the middle where Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Oriental, and Bukidnon converge. No matter the challenge, Jornel's mission has been to be the patient and persevering guardian of Alalum Falls and manager of Sumilao Pasalubong Center. When the tourists stopped coming even before the pandemic hit, Jornel became unstoppable in looking for alternatives such as promoting their local products through social media. He also takes pride in the locals' adherence to protocols for a safer and better future, as they await for the return of the visitors.



👤 Maria "Whang-od" Oggay  
📍 Buscalan Village, Tinglayan, Kalinga

The legendary "Apo" Whang-Od started tattooing at age fifteen. More than eighty years later, she's still practicing traditional Kalinga tattooing in Buscalan. With the help of her apprentices, she continues to carry out the thousand-year-old batok to ensure that it never fades, amidst the challenges brought about by the pandemic. Through her, the practice of batok is forever tattooed in Philippine history, culture, and tourism.



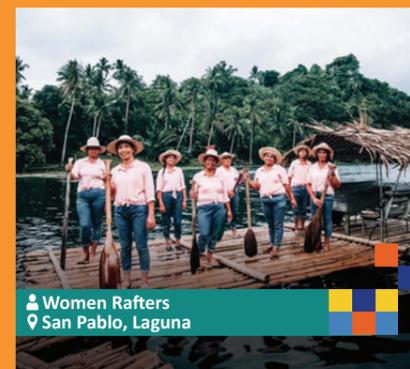
👤 Loboc River Balsa Cultural Performers  
📍 Loboc River, Bohol

The Loboc River Balsa Cultural Performers have brought music and dance to a once sleepy town with their cultural concert on a floating raft. The performing group has entertained thousands of foreign and local visitors alike – and this has provided a steady source of income for them. The performers are ready to safely reunite with their audience, and once again entertain them with their music and dance. Truly, these children and their exemplary talents have strengthened the cultural tourism of Bohol over time.



👤 Angelo Cayabo  
📍 Puerto Princesa, Palawan

The women rafters of Lake Pandin, Laguna, began their journey rowing just a single raft and the simple dream of uplifting the lives of their respective families. Over a decade later, rafting has become one of the treasured tourist activities in Lake Pandin, ultimately rowing the community towards a better life. These strong, unstoppable women are ready to resiliently row their rafts towards a better future and bounce back from the pandemic.



👤 Women Rafters  
📍 San Pablo, Laguna



👤 Rambo (tour guide)  
📍 Batad, Banaue

Trek with this furry companion to see the centuries-old terraces of Batad! Ramon Binalit of Ramon Homestay's dog, Rambo, is the four-legged tour guide and the town's unofficial cultural ambassador. He walks tourists through the terraces, passing by the huts where you can catch stories of folklore from the locals. This way, Rambo continues to help preserve the Ifugao traditions, and enthusiastically awaits the return of the tourists with a wagging tail.

Norita Pangkalan, one of the Yakan Weavers of Zamboanga, continues to work on high quality table runners, scarves, wallets, bags, placemats, and brasswares with heritage designs of bright colors and geometric shapes. Embedding resilience in every craft, the Yakan Weavers continue to reflect strength and culture in every thread of their weaving.



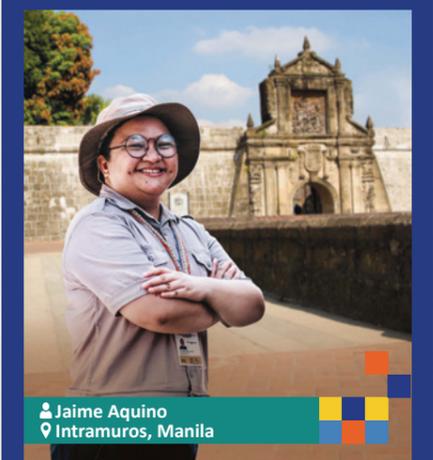
👤 Norita Pangkalan  
📍 Zamboanga City



👤 Richard Alyangan & Errold Bayona  
📍 Sta. Cruz Island, Zamboanga City

Richard Alyangan and Errold Bayona, tour guides of Zamboanga's iTravel Tourist lane, find their ultimate joy and sense of fulfillment through conversations with visitors from different parts of the world. However, the pandemic prohibited them from sharing the best of Zamboanga experiences to more people. Thankfully, as the country journeys toward healing and recovery, Richard and Errold are excited to welcome guests again, and are thrilled to share the beauty of Zamboanga with smiles on their faces.

Angelo Cayabo, a former dishwasher and waiter, decided to leave the employee life and took the risk of putting up a travel agency in the 1990s. He then became a tour boat operator, and his groundbreaking research on dolphin activities helped boost tourism in Puerto Princesa, Palawan. His courage of taking risks has helped him stay resilient amidst challenges in the past couple of years. Despite the trials, he plans to continue his legacy of educating future visitors about dolphins through his dolphin watching tours.



👤 Jaime Aquino  
📍 Intramuros, Manila

Jaime Aquino, President of Deafinite Tour Guiding Services, continues to work for a more inclusive Philippine tourism amidst the pandemic. For her, the sights and culture of the Philippines should be accessible to all, including the deaf community. Breaking through limits time and time again, she continues her mission to help people like her to learn more about the rich history of Intramuros through sign language.

# HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HRMIS)

The HRMIS aims to deliver an integrated, robust, and flexible information system, optimized specifically to address the strategic requirements of the TPB Human Resource towards becoming a center of excellence in human capital management.

In addition, the goal of the Personnel and Human Resource Development Division (PHRDD) is to utilize technology through the HRMIS and create efficiency and streamline processes which include:

- 1 HR Administration System - Planning and Organization, Acquisition and Talent Management, Development/Career and Performance Management, Compensation and Benefits, Time and Attendance, Payroll Administration, Training and Events, Employee Relations, Health and Wellness, Employee and Managerial Self-Service, System Administration, Records Management/Personnel Administration, Personnel
- 2 Managerial and Employee Self-Service System - online services to be defined in a separate Customization Specification Report. Online service shall include, but not limited to, online leave and training applications, job applications, and payroll services.
- 3 Applicant Service - online application, submission of employment requirements, evaluation of applicants and candidates, automated manpower requests, online publications, and replication of existing e-Careers module.
- 4 Timekeeping system interface for the Biometric System, employing real-time attendance.
- 5 People Analytics - fully customizable on-screen analytics tool, which includes the creation of analytics dashboards for executives and employees and a provision for descriptive and predictive analytics reports.

The system has been on trial since 25 October 2021. Target date of implementation is first (1st) quarter of 2022 which will be one of the PHRDD's milestone for next year.  
38 | December 2021

## HELP, UNDERSTAND AND GIVE SUPPORT (HUGS) TPB MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

In compliance with the Civil Service Commission Memorandum Circular No. 04, series of 2020 with subject: "Mental Health Program in the Public Sector" and pursuant to Republic Act No. 11036 otherwise known as the Mental Health Act (MHA) of 2018 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations signed on January 22, 2019, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines integrates and advocates for mental health initiatives in all human resource and organizational development policies and programs in the agency and ensure that every employee is consciously aware and sensitive to mental health issues and programs.

The TPB, through its Help, Understand, and Give Support (HUGS) Program, commits itself to promoting the well-being of people by ensuring that:

- » Mental health is valued, promoted, and protected;
- » Mental health conditions are treated and prevented;
- » Timely, affordable, high quality, and culturally-appropriate health care for these conditions are made available to its employees ;
- » Such health services are free from coercion and accountable to the service users; and
- » Employees affected by mental health conditions are able to exercise the full range of human rights and participate fully at work, free from stigmatization and discrimination.

At the onset, the HUGS was relaunched on October 11, 2021 in celebration of Mental Health Awareness Week.

In addition, PHRDD also engaged some TPB employees as designated Official TPB HUGGERS who helped in the implementation of mechanisms and strategies relating to the Mental Health Program.

The Official HUGGERS were designated through an office order, approved by the TPB Chief Operating Officer (COO) and will likewise be sent to attend seminars and capacity building activities.

*How Are you feeling today?*



# TPB's CSR Aids PCMC, PGH, and Museo Pambata

With hundreds and thousands of Filipinos depending on government/public hospitals, limiting or stopping operations is never an option especially amidst the pandemic. When The Philippine Children's Medical Center (PCMC) asked for help, the TPB answered the call.

The hospital needed supplies of 3M N95 Particulate Respirator Face Mask to protect the healthcare staff of their non-COVID areas. Since the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) of their entire staff was not enough, the TPB procured the following items and donated them to PCMC with the help of seven (7) TPB employees and three (3) utility personnel who volunteered to distribute:



50 Boxes or 1,000 pcs. of 1870+ Aura N95 Mask



25 Boxes or 1,250 pcs. of 9105 Vflex N95 Mask



25 Boxes or 500 pcs. of 8210 N95 Mask



40 Boxes or 800 pcs. of 1860 N95 Mask

Apart from providing supplies to PCMC, TPB also brought smiles to the pediatric ward of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) by donating 1,500 pieces of destination postcards with colored pens. The same items were also given to visitors of the Museo Pambata and the beneficiaries of its charity project to give hope to children in these trying times.

Helping each other has no deadline nor limits.

As they say, if we want to succeed as a society, no one should be left behind. TPB Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) will continue its mission to provide assistance not just to healthcare workers but to anyone in need. After all, we were born not just to enjoy life, but to make the world a better place.

# SAVE THE DATE



14 - 16  
MARCH  
2022

