

# TPB spotlight

A Quarterly e-Magazine of the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines

APRIL - JUNE 2022

## SAILING WITH RENEWED HOPE: TPB SUPPORTS ZAMBOANGA COMMUNITY WITH CSR INITIATIVE

**TPB INTENSIFIES  
MOTORCYCLE TOURISM,  
LINES UP YEAR-ROUND  
ACTIVATIONS**

**TPB RETURNS TO DUBAI  
FOR THE 2022 ARABIAN  
TRAVEL MART**

**PHILIPPINE READIES  
FOR GLOBAL MICE;  
EXPANDS HORIZON ON  
2022 IMEX FRANKFURT**



# spotlight

Editor-in-Chief  
MARIA ANTHONETTE C. VELASCO-ALLONES

Managing Editors  
CHARLES AAMES M. BAUTISTA  
ANTHEA REINE Q. IFURUNG

Associate Editors  
MARIA FEBBIE R. ALACAPA  
APRIL ROSE M. ENERIO

Creative Directors  
MARIA NEDALIN L. MIRANDA  
KRISANDRA A. CHEUNG  
PAULINE SARAH N. MANCITA

Copy Editor  
MA. PATRICIA M. YULO

Section Editors  
JOCELYN PATRICE L. DECO  
LEAH MARIE C. SY  
JANET W. CANOY  
TERESITA DL. LANDAN  
ARNOLD T. GONZALES  
WILSON R. SUBA

Contributors  
ROSE ANNE B. CRUZ  
GIANNA M. AÑONUEVO  
MA. JANELLE CRISHA S. CU  
JOSE GANTIGA P. JR.

Layout Artists  
JAMESON B. CARANZA  
SHIRLEY C. ESPADERO  
LORENZ D. CABANOS  
JEN MARIELLE R. BAWAR

Photographers  
UHDE L. ASUAL  
NARJAY R. CALINAO

---  
SPOTLIGHT is a quarterly e-magazine of the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines spearheaded by its Marketing Communications Department.

If you are willing to contribute and share in the upcoming issues, please contact April Enerio [april\\_enerio@tpb.gov.ph](mailto:april_enerio@tpb.gov.ph). Contributors will be acknowledged accordingly. \*Articles are edited to suit length and style parameters.

**TPBPHL**  
TOURISM PROMOTIONS BOARD PHILIPPINES

4F Legaspi Towers 300 Roxas Boulevard  
Manila, Philippines 1004  
Tel Nos: +63 2 85259318 to 27  
Email: [info@tpb.gov.ph](mailto:info@tpb.gov.ph)  
Website: [www.tpb.gov.ph](http://www.tpb.gov.ph)

[f](#) [i](#) [t](#) @tpbphl

## CONTENTS

1 On The Spot

### HEADLINES

- 2 TPB Supports Zamboanga Community with CSR Initiative
- 4 What the WTTC Global Summit Means for the Philippines
- 5 TPB Intensifies Motorcycle Tourism, Lines Up Year-Round Activations
- 6 TPB Strengthens Solidarity with Nayong Pilipino Foundation: Donates Motor Vehicles to Augment its Operations

### MARKET LINKS

- 7 The Philippines creates new MICE opportunities at AIME 2022
- 8 TPB Returns to Dubai for the 2022 Arabian Travel Mart
- 9 Excitement Abounds for Philippine Tourism at the 9th Regional Travel Fair in Sorsogon
- 10 The Pursuit of Days of Future Past
- 11 The Happy Fiber
- 12 Green Means Go! The Philippines Sustainable Tourism Journey

### MICE UPDATES

- 14 The Philippines Readies for Global MICE; Expands Horizon on 2022 IMEX Frankfurt
- 15 High hopes abound for Philippines to Host Rotary International Convention in 2028

### TOURISM BYTES

- 16 DOT Spotlights PWDs and Women in Tourism with New "It's More Fun for All" Campaign
- 17 DOT Eyes Medical Tourism Boost
- 18 Colors of Mindanao: New Campaign Paints Mindanao with a Colorful New Brand

### BLOGGER'S BOX

- 19 Take A Bow, Davao

### BUCKET LIST

- 20 These 11 Islands are Zamboanga City's Hidden Gems

### MORE FUN

- 22 Post-Pandemic Travel: Among new travel discoveries mo?

### SNAPSHOTS

- 23 Marinduque: Your Next Destination of Choice

### HR ON THE MOVE

- 24 TPB's "Women's Month" Activities

### MEMBERS' BULLETIN

- 25 Millennial Resorts Achieves the First and Prestigious EDGE Certification for Resort Hospitality in the Philippines



COVER PHOTO:

In this issue, we put a spotlight on the numerous happenings in the Philippine tourism industry that manifest the steady recovery of a more resilient and sustainable tourism. These include the successful staging of the first-ever Philippine-hosted WTTC Global Summit, intensified Philippine Motorcycle Tourism, and community-building initiative with the Hope Paddlers of Santa Cruz Island in Zamboanga among others.

## ON THE SPOT

By God's grace, we wrapped up the second quarter with a blast!

We endeavored to squeeze all the great news and shared achievements we've had in the last three months in this Issue, highlighting the huge success of our hosting the 21st WTTC Global Summit, and carrying on the hope that this continues to pave the way for more "better normal" events throughout the year.

We also bring to the center the intensified efforts in promoting the Philippine Motorcycle Tourism (PMT) and Faith and Heritage activities all over the country, thanks, to the zest of our motorcycle riding clubs and communities, and the constant support from Ms. Jet Lee, our PMT ambassador. Indeed, the first half of the year has been #MoreFunWithYou as we scaled new horizons which would not have been possible without unceasing support from you — our stakeholders.

The 2nd quarter also ushered in renewed efforts to roll out the 2nd COVID-19 vaccine booster shots to our tourism frontliners. And speaking of boosters, TPB also joined DOT in its bid to boost medical tourism, as well as expand inclusive campaigns for women and PWDs in the industry.

We kept our presence globally, and participated in the recent 2022 Arabian Travel Mart and 2022 IMEX Frankfurt, allowing us to market and promote the Philippines as a top of mind and MICE-ready destination to various audiences.

Amidst the organized chaos of the numerous events and engagements last quarter, we paused and took time to do our share of community-building with the roll out of our first CSR activity for the year last June 25, helping the Hope Paddlers of Santa Cruz Island in Zamboanga with our donation of new flatboats and vintas for use in their mangrove tours.

It was heartwarming to see that the boat paddlers painted the yellow boats with the markings "TPB" and "Bagong Pagasa". Indeed, I leave this Quarter with a renewed hope for the best of days ahead.

I hope you enjoy reading this Q2 issue as much as I did!

MARIA ANTHONETTE C. VELASCO-ALLONES, CESO I  
Chief Operating Officer  
Tourism Promotions Board - Philippines





# TPB SUPPORTS ZAMBOANGA COMMUNITY WITH CSR INITIATIVE

TPB's marketing assistance to SCBT sites aims to provide capacity-building opportunities to members in support of its creation of marketing and tourism activities while increasing the value of local resources.



"We always aim to give a holistic approach when reaching out to help our SCBT sites. Now that the Santa Cruz Island government is allowing tourists to visit, we hope that these boat donations will not only aid in bolstering the island's economic recovery but also help the tourism workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. When we uplift a community's livelihood, we also uplift their quality of life," said TPB COO Allones.



Apart from the donations, TPB also organized a soup kitchen serving nutritious hot soup and meals to kids and residents of the islands.

The CSR activity in Zamboanga Island is the first leg of the outreach program that TPB is planning to undertake this year. More community-based CSR activities are in the pipeline for the upcoming months and the agency continues to extend help and support to local communities.



As part of its Sustainable Community-based Tourism (SCBT) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines turned over flatboats, vintas, and school supplies to the residents of Santa Cruz Island in Zamboanga last June 25. This activity is in partnership with Yellowboat of Hope Foundation and the People's Organization of Sta. Cruz Island.

Concluding the turn over activity, TPB also conducted a CSR program by distributing more than 140 bags with various school supplies (writing notebooks, pencils, crayons, pad papers, destination postcards and colored pens) to the children of the communities and dry bags for the local fishermen.



## What the WTTTC Global Summit Means for the Philippines

It has been more than a month since the Philippines hosted the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC) Global Summit, yet its impact continues to be felt. With more than a thousand delegates in attendance, more than 50 countries represented, and 10,000 virtual registrations, the Summit is a testament to the country's potential to host major international events, notwithstanding a pandemic, signaling that the best is yet to come.



From L-R: WTTTC President & CEO Julia Simpson, DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, WTTTC Chair Arnold Donald

Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat in her opening remarks at the Summit said that the Philippine tourism players “took advantage of the pandemic to reimagine the industry and rebuild a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable sector”. This not only resulted to the numerous programs the DOT and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines mounted in line with the Tourism Response and Recover Plan (TRRP) and also the reformulated National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP) but also paved the way for tourism events to continue, notably those that used the hybrid format, even during the most crucial period of the pandemic.

Perhaps, it's the Filipino resilience and the innate Bayanihan spirit that led the Philippine tourism industry to overcome the challenges of the pandemic and successfully host its biggest international tourism event yet. But public-private collaboration should also be recognized as well as the capacity

to balance economic and public health needs. As Secretary Puyat said, “We have likewise put much effort into discerning the most effective combination between the enforcement of health and safety guidelines and personal convenience - the delicate balancing act of implementing measures to ensure everyone's safety without placing unreasonable burdens on the traveling public.”

The Philippines is poised to host more tourism events in the near future, but the country may also see a shift in the way its destinations would serve tourists as the Global Summit highlighted the need to be more sustainable in a world that has drastically changed in the last two years.

This means mass tourism will take a backseat and give way to responsible travel that entails the enforcement of carrying capacities, green initiatives, and ensuring that tourism destinations will remain livable and enjoyable for both visitors and locals alike.



From L-R: Barcelona City Council Councilor Xavier Marcé, TPB COO Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones, Int'l Broadcaster Zeinab Badawi, JLL Hotels & Hospitality Global CEO Gilda Perez-Alvarado, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority CEO Raki Phillips

As TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones said, “If we carry on with sustainability initiatives in a way that address the development goals set out for us, then I think we're getting there and it should be a good journey.”



## TPB INTENSIFIES MOTORCYCLE TOURISM, LINES UP YEAR-ROUND ACTIVATIONS

With the easing of travel restrictions and the resumption of leisure travel across diverse local destinations, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines and the Department of Tourism (DOT) intensified the promotion of the Philippine Motorcycle Tourism (PMT) Program following the successful launch and kick-off ride last November 2021.

PMT aims to promote Philippine tourism destinations while helping local tour operators and local businesses bounce back from the impact of the pandemic by encouraging more motorcycle sports enthusiasts to engage in motorsports tourism activities as a potential niche market.

“We continue to push the limits to create new ways to enjoy safe travel because we know that traveling and adventure give us purpose and new perspectives. This time, we want to capitalize on exploring the country on two wheels and presenting an alternative way of traveling to entice the public to discover more of the Philippines' interesting culture, sites, cuisines, and other tourism products,” said TPB COO Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones.

To date, the TPB has successfully organized ride events in CALABARZON, Central Luzon, and Bicol Regions in close coordination with DOT regional offices. The recently concluded



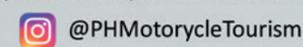
#ExcitingBicol PMT Ride was held simultaneously in the provinces of Albay (Mayon 360 Ride), Sorsogon (Countryside Ride), Camarines Sur (Naga City Ride), and culminated in Catanduanes for the Happy Island 360 Ride that covered 11 municipalities and highlighted the province-wide celebration of this year's Abaca Festival.

Moreover, TPB has strengthened its partnership with Breakfast Ride Community, Vespa Club of the Philippines, Harley Owners Group Manila Chapter, Mindanao Confederation of Big Bike Clubs (MCBBC), Oriental Mindoro Motorcycle Riders Club (OMMRC) Inc., Honda XADV Owners Club, and Adventure Team Philippines by supporting its ride events, activities, and advocacies.

Last 25 June, TPB supported the 1st PH Ride with a Purpose organized by Harley Owners Group Manila Chapter wherein more than 1,000 motorcycle riders and enthusiasts gathered to rally for responsible motorcycle riding and promote the Quezon province as an adventure and culinary tourism destination.

“We are confident that through these initiated and supported activities, we were able and will continue to, even more, regain the confidence of the public to travel domestically for the sustained recovery of the tourism industry,” COO Allones added.

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



# TPB STRENGTHENS SOLIDARITY WITH NAYONG PILIPINO FOUNDATION:

## DONATES MOTOR VEHICLES TO AUGMENT ITS OPERATIONS



The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines made history as it turned over, for the first time, two motor vehicles that have been under its stewardship since 2013 to the Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF).

This year, the TPB explored this type of partnership with other government agencies starting with the NPF, with another unit earmarked for the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

TPB Chief Operating Officer (COO) Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones handed over the keys of two sedan units to NPF Executive Director Gertrudes Duran-Batocabe during the official turnover ceremony held last 26 April 2022.

The vehicles are intended to provide mobility amid COVID restrictions to support NPF's frontline services and day-to-day operations.

Present during the ceremony were Deputy Chief Operating Officer (DCOO) for Corporate Affairs Jocelyn Patrice Deco, Commission on Audit (COA) Lead Auditor Atty. Anthony Gueta, Administrative Department Acting Head Leah Marie Sy, Procurement and General Services Division Chief Eloisa Romero, together with NPF Deputy Executive Director Atty. Jovertlee Pudan, Deputy Executive Director Joyce Ann Caigas, and Engineer John Patrick Atole.



TPB COO Allones handed over the keys of two sedan units to NPF Executive Director Atty. Batocabe



Signing of property transfer report witnessed by COA Lead Auditor Atty. Anthony Gueta

"I am happy to share that this is the first time that the TPB transferred the ownership of its vehicles to another government agency. Through this transfer, we hope to show our solidarity with the Nayong Pilipino as we both push for the recovery of tourism in our country. We hope that these vehicles will serve Nayong Pilipino well as they have served us in the past," Allones said.  
6 | June 2022

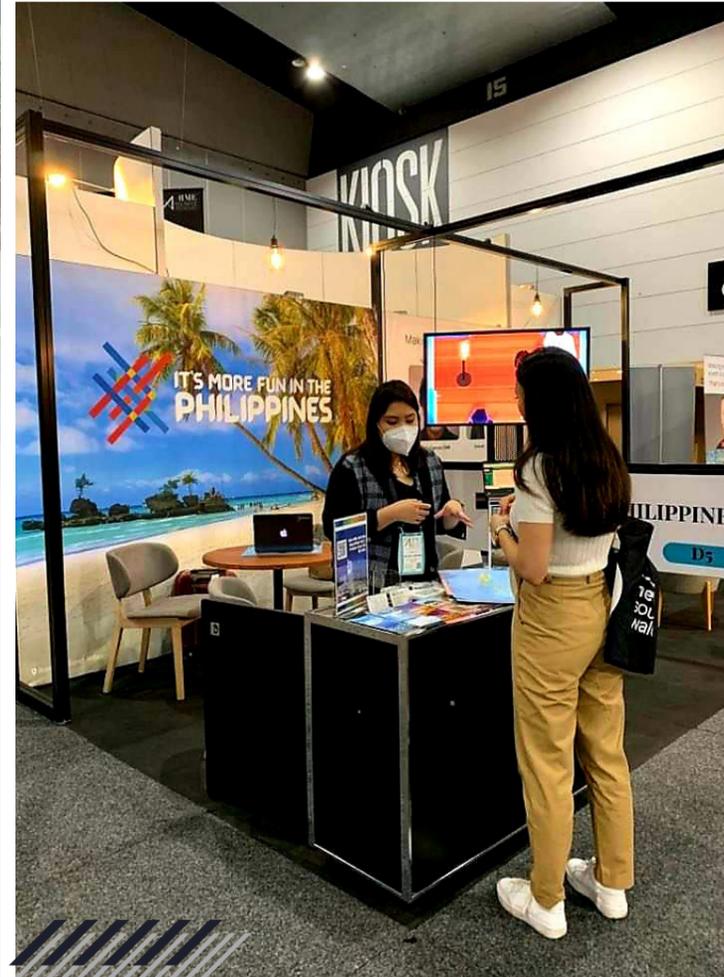
"As we have just gone through the hardships of the pandemic and are now slowly trying to recover, we cannot overlook that the need for resources is integral for us to move forward and to carry out our duties and responsibilities," Allones added.

"We sincerely appreciate how TPB reached out to us, and quickly responded to our request. We are very grateful to receive these vehicles as these will be helpful in fulfilling our duly-delegated duties and providing prompt service to the public," said Atty. Duran-Batocabe upon receiving the keys.

The TPB and NPF are both attached agencies of the Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT). Although varying in terms of scale, both TPB and NPF aim to promote the Philippines as mandated by its respective charters.

After the turnover, the units were delisted from the inventory of TPB pursuant to the guidelines of COA that require the disposition of equipment with maintenance costs reaching 30% of its value.

# The Philippines creates new MICE opportunities at AIME 2022



The Philippines, through the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines and the Department of Tourism in Sydney, participated in this year's hybrid edition of the Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) held last March 21 to April 01 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Center and through an online platform simultaneously.

centers comprised the Philippine contingent. To date, 104 sales leads were listed and are expected to bring business to the Philippines in the next two years.

After a two-year hiatus, Australia's AIME is back in a hybrid setup, serving as an avenue for industry decision-makers to connect, exchange ideas, and create business opportunities with more than 340 MICE planners and practitioners from across Asia Pacific, Europe, and US.

"This event is a major step forward in reviving the country's tourism industry, generating sales leads to the Philippines. This is also part of TPB's efforts to position the Philippines as an ideal MICE destination," said TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones.

The event kicked off with a series of education sessions that connected delegates from across the world to a day of innovative knowledge sharing and community building.

As the largest MICE trade show in Australia, AIME 2022 is the first international trade show hosted in Melbourne since the Australian borders reopened. New tourism products and services were showcased by more than 200 exhibitors from Japan, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, South Africa, and more.

Around 20 private sector companies from hotels, resorts, Destination Management Companies (DMCs), and conference



# TPB Returns to Dubai for the 2022 Arabian Travel Mart

After participating in the prestigious Dubai Expo, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines once again showcased the best of the Philippines at the 30th edition of the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) last 9-12 May 2022 at the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC).

The TPB, represented by its International Promotions Department (IPD), sponsored the 120 square meter Philippine booth that accommodated 22 private sector companies such as tour operators, hotels, resorts, and airlines for the promotion of leisure and luxury products in line with the "It's More Fun With You" campaign.

Marketing initiatives included a Gold Enhanced Profile (e.g., Featured Exhibitor handle, banner ads, and Digital Bag Entry advertising) and the hosting of a Philippine Networking Night on the first day (9 May) wherein ATM Buyers were treated to a Philippine-themed dinner and refreshments while meeting with Philippine Stand Sharers.

The venue, The Pavilion Bar & Restaurant located within the exhibition hall, was also designed with the "It's More Fun in the Philippines" campaign elements, and Filipino dishes were featured in the bar menu for the duration of the ATM.

Moreover, interviews with top media and travel networks such as Al Jazeera, TravTalk, and TTG were held at the Philippine booth as well as participation in the ATM 2022 Facebook Live Interview. All these and other efforts of the Philippine contingent eventually led to 350 new and existing

contacts signifying interest in promoting or including Philippine tourism offerings to their clients.

Since ATM 2022 was a SMART event, one of its innovative features was the use of the Smart Badge which allowed exhibitors to capture leads digitally, eliminating the need for the collection of business cards or distribution of flyers.

For the Philippine booth, the Smart Badge gathered a total of 445 interactions (or 445 visitors / users interested in Philippine products and information) for the 3-day event. Philippine digital brochures in English and Arabic that could be accessed via a QR code were also provided.

Additionally, the ATM held seminars and workshops conducted by influential figures from the travel industry; a travel technology exhibition including a Startup Showcase promoting tech innovations in the hospitality sector; a responsible tourism forum that discussed industry issues and solutions that advocate sustainable practices and ethical methods; dialogues and networking with top buyers from key source markets such as Saudi Arabia, China and India; and the "Arrival Dubai" series of webinars covering current and future trends for tours operators that would advance the business of creating in-destination experiences.

Similar to the 2021 event, the Virtual ATM was held a week after the physical event (17-18 May 2022) to maximize the Exhibitors' participation and enhance their opportunities to reach out to their target markets.



# EXCITEMENT ABOUND FOR PHILIPPINE TOURISM AT THE 9TH REGIONAL TRAVEL FAIR IN SORSOGON

Local tourism stakeholders were elated over the renewed interest and attention on Sorsogon and the Bicol region at the recently concluded hybrid edition of the 9th Regional Travel Fair (RTF) which ran from April 8 to May 01, 2022, at the Sorsogon Convention Center.

Organized by the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines and the Department of Tourism (DOT), this third hybrid edition of the RTF featuring #ExcitingBicol served as a venue for tourism stakeholders to promote and sell domestic tour packages, airline tickets, accommodation, and other tourism-related products and services to the public.

"As I stand before you with huge gratitude, this is a time of renewed commitment. Your presence here is a testament to that commitment that we all hold in our hearts individually and collectively, that we will steer the recovery of tourism through," said TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones.

The 9th RTF yielded a total estimated sales lead of Php 35 million during the business-to-business and business-to-consumer sessions. It also generated 3,459 business leads, 6,264 business card exchanges, and 983 registered attendees through its virtual platform.

Additionally, Php 294,777 actual sales were listed from the various local crafts and pasalubong (treats) from five exhibitor/sellers of the Department of Trade and Industry and the six featured artisans which included Masbate's Ayos Sapatos, Sorsogon's KALIPI Weavers, Tagbung Crafts, and Kapetolyo, as well as Albay's Natural Carpet Industries - NAPA and 1st Colonial – the home of the original sili ice cream.

A specially curated tourism webinar focusing on sales and marketing, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE), and building a more gender-balanced, resilient, and sustainable Philippine travel industry was attended by 350 online and onsite participants.

This year's first RTF sets a milestone as the first event held at the newly-built Sorsogon Convention Center, allowing the public to learn more about the province as an exciting destination not to be missed in tourists' travel plans.

Meanwhile, Sorsogon Governor Francis "Chiz" Escudero emphasized the need to share, more than the beauty of the places, the stories of each person visiting each destination during his welcome remarks: *"Ang turismo ay hindi lang sa simpleng magagandang beach, magagandang mga edipiso, at masasarap na pagkain. Para sa akin, higit sa lahat ng iyon, ang turismo ay tungkol sa kwento na pwedeng sabihin tungkol sa isang destinasyon."* ("Tourism is not just about beautiful beaches, stunning architectural buildings, and delicious food. It's also about telling the story of a destination.")

After nearly two years of limited movement due to the coronavirus pandemic, DOT expressed its optimism at the RTF that the tourism sector is on its way to full recovery while assuring that the public's health and safety continue to be its top priority as the country resumes full tourism operations.

TPB's Regional Travel Fairs have gone a long way since its first launch in 2018 but have remained true to its form to provide the public a platform to fulfill their travel dreams and spread the word about why it's still indeed more fun in the Philippines.



► Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones  
TPB Chief Operating Officer

Francis "Chiz" Escudero ◀  
Sorsogon Governor

# THE PURSUIT OF DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

The year 2021 marked one of the Philippines' history-defining moments that traces its roots back to the fateful landing of the Spanish Armada de Molluca, captained by the Portuguese Navigator Ferdinand Magellan, on our shores in 1521.

It was the year when 500 Years of Christianity was celebrated, further cementing our place on the world map as the only Christian nation in Asia.



On 11 May 2022, the Philippine Faith and Heritage Tourism began its Pilgrims Tours at the Mactan Shrine on the island of Cebu, historically considered to be the "ground zero" with respect to the conversion of our ancestors to Christianity. The 119-kilometer Cebu-Bohol pilot circuit was overseen by the TPB with partners Creative Travel and Tours International (CTTI) and Radio Veritas Global Broadcasting System (RV).

The pilot run aims to set the template for the Faith and Heritage Tourism in the Philippines before its rollout to the public, ensuring beyond its intention to support the steady return of domestic tourism, and that its objective to fortify the historical context of Christianity as a religion and as a cultural identity embedded into the very fiber of the Filipino people will resonate among tourists and the communities involved in this much-needed project.

During the visit to the St. Joseph the Worker Cathedral in Tagbilaran, Bohol, TPB Chief Operating Officer (COO) Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones highlighted the importance of advocating for an all-inclusive approach to Faith Tourism, showcasing the effort of local talents that took part in the rehabilitation of the churches, and the conscious effort of the clergy, local historians, and guides in championing consistent and valid historical accounts. Moreover, COO Allones mentioned the relevance of Faith Tourism in rediscovering destinations, reliving history, and rekindling faith among the community members.

The Pilgrims Tour covered the following historic Philippine Catholic churches in Cebu: the miraculous Birhen sa Regala/ Our Lady of the Rule; Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral; Basilica Minore del Sto. Niño, home of the Infant Jesus gifted by Ferdinand Magellan to Rajah Humabon's wife; the picturesque Patrocino de Maria Parish of Boljoon; San Guillermo de Aquitania Parish of Agao; St. Michael Archangel Parish of Carcar; and St. Catherine de Alexandria. Likewise, the Bohol leg of the tour visited the following equally renowned churches: St. Joseph Cathedral, St. Peter Church of Loboc along the pristine waters of the Loboc River, the Baroque-Neoclassical church of Our Lady of the Light Church of Loon, and the Sta. Cruz Church of Maribojoc.



The Cebu-Bohol leg of the Pilgrims Tours concluded with a Thanksgiving Mass officiated by Father Arnold Layoc of RV at the Our Lady of Assumption Church of Dauis, Bohol. The program's CALABARZON and the Manila-Bulacan-Pampanga Circuits are next in the pipeline.

The TPB hopes that beyond the strategic design of the Philippine Faith and Heritage Program as one of the tourism initiatives to help our economy bounce forward, it will serve as a constant reminder to Catholics and Non-Catholics that the pursuit of immersing ourselves in the past provides clarity to where we ought to place ourselves in the future.



It was also in the same year that the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines crafted the Philippine Faith and Heritage Tourism, primarily highlighting the relationship between our Christian faith and its antiquity evident in the enduring heritage sites around the Philippines.

The TPB devised the "Pilgrim's Passport" to guide and encourage the holders to visit all 537 Jubilee Churches in the Philippines. Moreover, it also supports incentivized Pilgrimage Tours in the country, strengthening further faith-based tourism.



# THE HAPPY FIBER

The Abaca fiber, known as the major economic driver of the island of Catanduanes, creates what seems to be the Happy Fiber that Abacaleros and Catanduanons use in forging strong community ties with those who set foot on the Happy Island.

This year, it once again unraveled as the province celebrated the 6th Abaca Festival with the theme "Uswag Abaca, Dagos sa Maogmang Isla" or "Forward to Abaca, Welcome to the Happy Island" which highlighted the declaration of Catanduanes as the Abaca Capital of the Philippines by virtue of Republic Act 11700 and the opening of the Happy Island's doors for the in-person celebration of the festivity after two years of online observance due to the pandemic.

The 5-day festival kicked off last 24 May 2022 at the Capitol Grounds of the Provincial Capitol in Virac with hundreds, if not thousands, of energetic and enthusiastic Catanduanons in attendance. Top officials, including Catanduanes Provincial Governor Joseph C. Cua, Chief of Staff Camille Gianan representing Catanduanes Congressman Hector S. Sanchez, Baras Mayor Jose Paolo J. Teves III representing Talino at Galing ng Pinoy (TGP) Partylist Congressman Jose J. Teves, Jr., Supervising Tourism Operations Officer Carmel Bonifacio-Garcia, and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones, also graced the occasion.



The opening program, which featured the Catanduanes State University Student Chorale rendering a heartfelt doxology and showing vocal prowess in their rendition of the Philippine National Anthem, was shortly followed by the Ribbon Cutting and Opening of Abaca Arte Isla at the Capitol Lobby where



Abaca textile products, handicrafts, and art pieces by local manufacturers and artists were put on display. Similarly, a Ribbon Cutting and Opening of the Agri, Trade, and Tourism Fair followed at the Capitol Grounds where local products and services were showcased. The Festival Dance and Arko Abaca Competition also took place.

In her keynote speech, TPB COO Velasco-Allones underscored three important points, or the Three C's, Catanduanons should celebrate during the festivities: the celebration in the spirit of gratitude, collaboration and greater convergence, and community building anew. At the same time, she recognized the Abacaleros as the reason for the celebration and acknowledged their resilience to push the economy and tourism forward.

The COO also emphasized that sustaining the tradition of Abaca farming should not only be for economic purposes but as a way to draw a brand for the island as a capital of ingenuity, creativity, and culture, reflecting the passion and commitment of the Abacaleros and Catanduanons. She then assured the Catanduanons of the corporate's support in promoting the province not just as the Abaca Capital of the Philippines but also as an island of happy people, great food, wonderful nature, and adventure.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Motorcycle Tourism (PMT) Riders, along with PMT Ambassador Maria Rica "Jet Lee" Cabarrubias, also showed their support to the festival by leading the Happy Island Catanduanes Leg of the Exciting Bicol Ride.



# GREEN MEANS GO!

## The Philippines Sustainable Tourism Journey

The concept of Sustainable Development has been around since its introduction in the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report by the United Nations and its eventual adaptation to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015.

The grand design of Sustainable Development is to allow economies to grow without compromising the robustness of the environment. Consequently, this expanded the ambit of this generation's "Woke Era" from promoting social and political justice to championing the "Green Movement" to combat the furtherance of irreversible damage to ecological resources due to its misuse and abuse.

The menu for curating the right sustainable approach in the tourism industry is extensive and widely practiced, from energy and waste management and water conservation to heritage and culture preservation to name a few.

Sustainable efforts in tourism inadvertently became the buy-in for travelers over time, choosing destinations that campaign for the "Greener Good" through their operations, products, and services.

During the 21st World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit in Manila, the WTTC launched the Hotel Sustainability Basics (HSB) to help jumpstart the global hotel industry's sustainability journey in an aligned and strategic manner. The HSB criteria, which are open-source and accessible to the members of the hotel industry, consist of 12 indicators which are then divided into three major categories: Efficiency, Planet, and People.

Hotel and property owners and operators are encouraged to adapt the HSB criteria and benchmark with each other through the Greenview's Green Lodging Trends Report and have their hotels and properties validated and certified through the verification process which the WTTC will launch in the fourth quarter of 2022.

The Department of Tourism's landmark projects like the ANAHAW Certification for Sustainable Tourism (in collaboration with GRaT Center for Appropriate Technology through the Zero Carbon Resorts) developed foolproof measures that ensure hotels and resorts to comply with the highest sustainability standards in their day-to-day operations. Likewise, DOT's "Keep the Fun Going" campaign allows tourists to take part in the department's advocacy by raising awareness about responsible travel and reinforcing sustainable practices through gamified challenges.

The holistic approach to promoting sustainable tourism is front and center not only for DOT but for its attached agencies as well. For the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, DOT's marketing and promotional arm, supporting local community-based tourism sites and attractions has been a priority thrust since 2018 through the sustainable community-based tourism (SCBT) project. The SCBT project includes the identification, assessment, and inclusion of a local community-based tourism site or attraction in the tourism circuits promoted by the agency to domestic and international markets.



One of the emerging sustainable tourism sites in the country is the internationally recognized and multi-awarded Masungi Georeserve in Baras, Rizal, a geotourism site built on the principle of environmental and social conservation of the area.

Ms. Ann Adeline Dumaliang, Managing Trustee of the Masungi Georeserve Foundation, shared what sustainable tourism is for her as an advocate herself:

"Sustainable tourism for me is about understanding and taking transformative action in our roles as stewards in the destinations, communities, and places we belong to. It's about positively contributing to an area's sense of and pride of place and helping it become a better place for the planet and people. Regenerative tourism and geotourism are what, more clearly, encapsulate our brand of sustainable tourism."

Further, when asked if the Masungi Georeserve is poised to be a sustainable tourist destination, Ms. Dumaliang explained that "Masungi Georeserve is transformative and regenerative in its approach. Our experiences are about the importance of the karst landscape we are moving in with a focus on quality instead of quantity as a metric of success."



We have an environmental carrying capacity which we respect, and we have decisively opted for low-impact engineering approaches instead of traditional development, taking seriously our role as stewards of the area for the long haul. Most importantly, we have already restored the area we are moving in for two decades now and further use our returns to lead the restoration and protection of some 2000 more hectares of land, some of which constitute the Upper Marikina Watershed - an area critical to the safety of 20 million Filipinos all the way downstream in Metro Manila, and one that has suffered a continuous decline in its forest cover (from 19% in 2011 to 11% in 2018) despite being declared a protected area. Our voice, visitors, and allies have become instrumental in overcoming anomalies and tactics in organized crime, speaking truth to power, and overcoming inertia for watershed rehabilitation."

With the effort of WTTC in its HSB initiative, DOT's ANAHAW Certification for Sustainable Tourism, and TPB's SCBT, Ms. Dumaliang shared her hope for the sustainable tourism in the country:

"... I hope for sustainable tourism to be mainstreamed and elevated in the Philippines in the coming years - the norm

instead of the exemption, building on what has been started in this administration. This is only sensible being a country that relies on its natural heritage for tourism, and tourism being an industry that contributes significantly to our GDP, and one that is threatened by the climate crisis. By taking deliberate action in this direction, we can make an even stronger mark in the global tourism space and increase its contributions to the country. If we are able to power sustainable tourism businesses that also serve as destination stewards, we can care better for more areas of the country at once. Last, if we are able to adopt the standards of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), we can have a quality community of changemakers in the tourism space that is able to power each other up."

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation through its Sustainable Development of Tourism Destinations study in 2013 clarified that sustainable tourism is not a type of tourism but rather a condition; a condition that the DOT and TPB vow to uphold to

remind us that we can continue to harness the significant economic contribution of the tourism industry if we foster sustainable practices, inevitably introducing a new mindset among Filipino people that: "The greener pasture isn't on the other side but it is under our feet if we choose to nurture it."



# The Philippines Readies for Global MICE; Expands Horizons on 2022 IMEX Frankfurt

In a bid to strengthen the Philippines' presence in the international MICE (Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conventions, and Exhibitions) scene, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines and the Department of Tourism (DOT) participated in the 2022 IMEX in Messe Frankfurt, Germany held from 31 May to 02 June 2022.

A major trade fair for events and incentive travel, IMEX brought together a worldwide roster of top MICE suppliers and key tourism industry players for three days of educational sessions, networking functions, business appointments, and exhibition showcases.

The Philippine delegation to the 2022 IMEX Frankfurt included exhibitors from hotels and resorts, convention venues, meetings and event management companies together with association buyers, destination management specialists, conference organizers, and incentive travel tour operators. This year's participation generated an estimated revenue of about Php 210 million.

As borders reopen and travel restrictions ease, the country looks forward to welcoming more foreign business travelers back to its borders, marking the end of the country's nearly two-year border closure due to the restrictions posed by the pandemic.

The MICE sector is poised to resume its dynamic business activities and rebuild its pre-pandemic vigor now that borders have reopened across the globe. As countries regain confidence in business travel, the Philippines has bolstered its MICE readiness efforts, coupled with government programs to ensure seamless and authentic travel experience to MICE organizers and business travelers.

Recently, the Philippines has set a standard for future MICE events with its successful hosting of the 21st World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit wherein global industry leaders and professionals described the Philippines' hosting as an "impactful summit" and was also lauded for its "extraordinary Philippine welcome" and warm Filipino hospitality.



14 | June 2022



From L-R: TPB Acting Head of the MICE Department Arnold Gonzales, FVW's Biz Travel EIC Oliver Graue, Central and Eastern Europe Tourism Attaché Margarita Patricia Valdes

## Government programs: A big boost to PH tourism Recovery

Government-initiated promotional campaigns and incentive schemes pave the way to more collaborative and sustained efforts in regenerating the Philippine MICE industry. In 2021, the TPB Philippines rolled out the enhanced MICE Plus Program, a set of initiatives and privileges that the TPB offers to boost the MICE industry by encouraging local and foreign MICE organizers to stage events in the Philippines.

The program also allows the TPB to offer its expertise through a wide range of services and business solutions from technical assistance on event planning to post-event city tours. Additional incentives include venue rental support, event technology solutions (for virtual and hybrid events), and the provision of care kits for delegates.

Moreover, the Philippines also joins the ATA Carnet System which took effect on 17 April 2022. It is seen to benefit micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises participating in international trade fairs and similar events as it grants relief from import duties and taxes of goods for one year and streamlines customs procedures for professional equipment and personal goods to be used in trade fairs, shows, and exhibitions. ATA Carnet System is recognized in 87 countries and territories worldwide.

Backed by government programs, the Philippine tourism industry has raised its game and recalibrated its efforts to cater to the shifting demands of the new normal. Now that borders have reopened with safety and health protocols in place, the Philippines is more than ready to welcome MICE organizers to its borders.



From L-R: DOT- LA Tourism Attaché Richmond Jimenez, former DOT Secretary Vicente Carlos III, Cristina Carlos, TPB Acting Head of the MICE Department Arnold Gonzales



## High hopes abound for Philippines to Host Rotary International Convention in 2028

The Philippines seems to be on the right track as the country bids to host the Rotary International Convention (RIC) in Manila in 2028 after a successful campaign during the recent RIC in Houston, Texas held on June 4-8, 2022.

Manila was shortlisted together with Krakow, Poland as the final bid contenders to host the prestigious event that gathers people from all cultures to take action and make positive changes for communities all over the world.

The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines and its representatives, Mr. Arnold Gonzales and Ms. Raquel Ruth Tria-Joya, the Acting Head and Sales and Accounts Management Division Acting Head respectively of the agency's MICE Department, joined the Philippine delegation of around 300 Rotarians to showcase what the Philippines has to offer during the 5-day event in Houston.

A traditional Philippine Breakfast, attended by more than 400 Rotarians from the Philippines and Asia, was organized, paving the way for the Philippines to formally announce its bid. The event also highlighted the support given by the TPB and the Department of Tourism (DOT) to bring the convention to the Philippines.

"The Philippine traditional breakfast provided friendly and fun interaction among the Rotarians. Foreign guests actively participated in Philippine traditional dances. Some even sang Philippine songs," Mr. Gonzales recounted. But for the MICE head, the innate Filipino hospitality also played a vital role. "The unique selling point of Philippine Rotarians is the legendary Filipino hospitality. Guests are looking forward to a fun convention experience as what our country brand promises to its visitors."

The RIC 2028 Bidding Committee, which is composed of various Rotary clubs in the Philippines, is now preparing for the ocular inspection of the Rotary International Board in Manila on 13-15 September 2022. The winning bidder is scheduled to be announced upon completion of the ocular inspection in Manila and Krakow either end of 2022 or early 2023.

Hosting a major MICE event is not something new to the TPB team, but for Mr. Gonzales, it still boils down to the overall packaging of a country as a result of collective efforts that allow bids to be successful. "The unique attributes of a destination are the basis for competitive advantage," he said. "Country brand strength, among other aspects, appears as an important foundation for a successful MICE destination, particularly in terms of political and economic stability as well as general attractiveness and capability as a tourism destination."

# DOT Spotlights PWDs and Women in Tourism with New “It’s More Fun for All” Campaign

SOURCE: DOT OPAA

The advocacy programs of the Department of Tourism (DOT) take center stage in “It’s More Fun for All” -- a new campaign that promotes inclusiveness and accessibility in the tourism sector.

The campaign highlights DOT programs namely: Tourism Integrates, Supports and Minds Women’s Rights and Child Safety (TourISM WoRCS); Barrier-free Tourism (BFT); and the Filipino Brand of Service Excellence (FBSE).

“Through this campaign, we believe that our advocacies on women empowerment, persons with disability (PWDs), and the protection of children in tourism, will get the much-needed support from our local governments and tourism stakeholders in making our industry more inclusive, accessible, safe, and fun for all.”, said Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat.

The campaign features a video series on stories and case studies of actual tourism workers who have benefitted from the DOT’s advocacy programs. Among them are the Association of Boat Operators president, Ka Tung Samson; community tour guide, Rubelyn Sarigumba; Virginia Dominguez, a weaver from Ilocos Sur; Isang Ibrahim, a community tourism worker of Sta. Cruz, Zamboanga; Manila deaf tour guide, Emerson; PLT. Maricel Guevarra, Commander in Chief of the Boracay Investigation and Detective Management Section (IDMS); and, the Museo ng Muntinlupa management and staff.



TourISM WoRCS is an advocacy program of the DOT that aims to educate tourism stakeholders on their role in eradicating women and children abuses within the tourism sector. This involves educating tourism stakeholders on the laws protecting women and children, as well as government policies and programs on anti-human trafficking.

Also included in this program are training courses that seek to empower women in the tourism industry, such as the Kulinarya program, where female participants are given skills training and livelihood opportunities on the preparation and presentation of heritage dishes for tourists.

The BFT advocacy program, on the other hand, enables travelers with accessibility needs, such as PWDs, senior citizens, and pregnant women to participate in and enjoy tourism experiences with utmost comfort and convenience. The program also provides opportunities for physically challenged individuals to be part of the tourism industry.

Lastly, the FBSE program is envisioned to enhance and uplift the quality of tourism services in the country. It is designed to promote service excellence in all tourism establishments by capacitating the country’s tourism workforce with a unique and exceptional way of delivering customer service founded on the 7Ms or the Filipino Core Values of Maka-Maylikha, Makatao, Maka-kalikasan, Makabansa, Masayahin, May Bayanihan, at May Pagasa.

“The DOT’s advocacy programs are envisioned to represent everything that is good about our tourism industry. They serve as a guide to all our partner agencies and stakeholders in properly dealing with all kinds of tourists, providing opportunities for all kinds of people, and protecting the vulnerable groups of the sector,” said Puyat.

# DOT EYES MEDICAL TOURISM BOOST



Photo from: cardinalsantos.com.ph

The Department of Tourism (DOT) has plans to boost medical tourism in the country--and increase public awareness for such in the global market.

Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat said the pandemic induced crisis brought into light the importance of medical travel and wellness tourism.

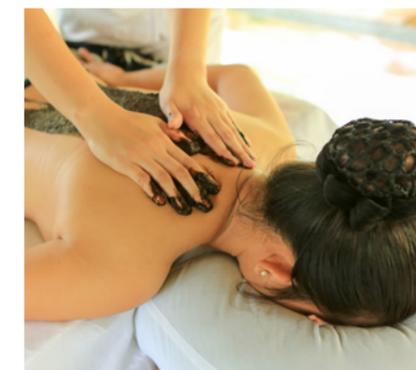
“We see so much untapped potential in the health and wellness industry. With world-class hospitals and facilities, skilled doctors and nurses, and the Filipino brand of hospitality, the Philippines is poised to become an attractive destination for medical tourism,” Puyat stressed.

“Currently, we have been implementing measures that will further develop the country as a medical tourism destination in a calibrated approach, including the development of an internal ecosystem and network of facilities in the country to accommodate concerns and issues surrounding this tourism product,” she added.

According to her, the DOT has developed a gold standard in approaching health and safety for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) events, following the successful hosting of the 21st World Travel and Tourism (WTTC) Global Summit in Manila last April, as well as institutionalizing health and safety in tourism activities.

Likewise, Puyat noted on the Department’s partnership with the Department of Health (DOH) and Makati Medical Center to attend to the medical needs of tourists.

She also cited the DOT’s ongoing coordination with relevant national government agencies and local government units (LGUs) to get tourism workers vaccinated against COVID-19, which has led to a 98% inoculation rate and helped restore confidence of people to travel to and within the Philippines.



## Untapped Potential

Juergen T. Steinmetz, a delegate in the recent WTTC Summit, shared his experience following the medical treatment at the Makati Medical Center for his left leg--which was diagnosed to be inflicted by a flesh-eating bacteria.

“It’s a secret to be revealed and in the making to come out and go viral. The Philippines will become the number one destination for medical tourism,” Steinmetz quipped in his recent article published by eturbonews.com.

“All the ingredients are here. Excellent world-class doctors and facilities, nurses that keep the standard for high-quality care around the world, and a beautiful country, wonderful beaches, good food, and exciting cities,” he added.

Steinmetz also noted the considerably cheaper medical costs in the Philippines compared to other countries.

Meanwhile, the DOT introduced its newly appointed director for medical, health and wellness tourism, Dr. Paulo Benito S. Tugbang.

Prior to his appointment, Tugbang led the Medical Travel and Wellness Tourism Program of the DOH and served with the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) Secretariat as the Technical Lead. Dr. Tugbang is a registered medical doctor, as well as a board top-notch nurse and midwife.

Source: DOT OPAA

# Colors of MINDANAO

NEW CAMPAIGN PAINTS MINDANAO WITH A COLORFUL NEW BRAND



Photo from: www.facebook.com/colorsofmindanao

In a bid to attract more tourists to the southern Philippine islands, the Department of Tourism (DOT) launched the Colors of Mindanao campaign which highlights Mindanao's diverse cultures, landscapes, and gastronomy.

Dubbed as the country's "Land of Promise," Mindanao boasts of its rich biodiversity and promising natural resources. Along with stunning beaches and highly-urbanized cities, Mindanao is also home to the surfing capital of the country.

"It is high time that travelers and tourists think of Mindanao as a top destination in the Philippines. The island region is blessed with a multitude of beautiful destinations, historical sites, and cultural wonders. The Colors of Mindanao campaign aims to attract different types of travelers to the region, from divers, eco-adventurers, and beach bums – to history buffs, foodies, and the faithful," said Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat.

Undersecretary for Mindanao Myra Paz Valderrosa-Abubakar spearheaded the campaign, together with the regional directors of Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, CARAGA, Davao and SOCCSKARGEN (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos) to help spur the tourism industry in the region.

The campaign also showcased new tourism products and circuits under color themes that correspond to every tourism aspect such as dive, sun and beach, ecotourism, farm tourism, culture and heritage, adventure and sports, food tourism and faith tourism.

These were formulated by the five Mindanao regional offices in a bid to foster unity in diversity, sustainability, inclusivity,

and a more progressive tourism not only in Mindanao but also in the country.

Tourism Secretary Romulo-Puyat noted that while each province is known for its unique attributes, "this is the first time that the whole of Mindanao is united under one banner."

"What a colorful banner it is, with each hue representing a tourism product that is part of an inter or intra regional circuit. This campaign is timely and significant, as we just recently reopened the Philippines to international tourism," she said.

Puyat further explained that "the campaign also highlights Halal and Muslim friendly tourism, one of the fastest-growing tourism sectors in the world. As one of the major new products of the DOT, halal tourism will bring special attention to the attractions and cuisine in Mindanao and help boost the tourism economy in the area."

In support of DOT's efforts to position Mindanao as a key tourist destination, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, the marketing and promotions arm of the DOT, has staged events in Mindanao to drive tourists to the region. These include the Regional Travel Fair in Zamboanga, the Philippine Motorcycle Tourism, and Island Philippines Fun Caravan, among others.

The Colors of Mindanao was previewed at the recently concluded 21st World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit in Manila. DOT Regional Directors graced the summit in a wardrobe made of Tausug fabrics, beadwork from Bukidnon, Yakan weaves, and other artisan handicrafts locally produced in Mindanao.



## Take A Bow, Davao

By: Marky Go

Just when the bustling activities in Davao mirror other big cities in the Philippines, the towering presence of Mt. Apo instantly looms and reminds visitors of the duality of Davao as an urban and countryside setting.

As many travelers before us would attest after exploring every nook and cranny and peeling off the layers of the city one by one, unearthing Davao's rich tasting culinary scene, vibrant culture, historical gems, jovial festivals (like the Kadayawan), and spectacular outdoor destinations is easier than downing a mouthful of the city's most notable fruit, the Durian.

This is, by no means, an aversion to the Durian fruit, which is apparently an acquired taste. But those who have assimilated its savor (and strong odor) ended up embracing it as the city's soul fruit. The same goes for Davao City. As each visitor notices and becomes fascinated with the city's many captivating gifts, Davao becomes a very likeable place enough for one to visit it again and again.

Being the largest city in the country in terms of land area doesn't bottle up visitors from seeing more of Davao. A short drive or a boat ride here and there will take you on a thrilling journey to the forested slopes of rugged mountain ranges where Philippine Eagles dare fly; to long white sandy shores that meet the azure-colored sea waters; to the mighty Davao river for some wild rafting ride; to a maze of street side gastronomic finds to satisfy one's sense of taste, and the list goes on. It seems like in Davao City, every wanderer can effortlessly please all their senses. No wonder locals proudly claim, "Life is Here".

All that, plus being the gateway to the cultural wonders of the rest of Mindanao, makes Davao City a destination that should be part of every curious traveler's itinerary. It's not just the hometown of the outgoing Philippine President; Davao should also be known for its culture, heritage, cuisine, wellness, nature, and so on.

So yeah, take a bow, Davao.

# THESE 11 ISLANDS ARE ZAMBOANGA CITY'S HIDDEN GEMS

By: Melo Villareal

If you think that white sand beaches and scenic views of the ocean can only be found in Palawan and parts of the Visayas region, then you might not have seen what Mindanao has to offer yet.

To promote AirAsia's existing routes, the airline, in partnership with Zamboanga City Tourism, invited travel writers for a four days/three nights story conference.

If you're a beach person, Once Islas (pronounced: on-se is-las) should definitely be your next beach destination. This group of islands is characterized by deep turquoise green waters, white sand beaches, and a hospitable local community. It is the island adventure waiting for you to discover.

Together with Zamboanga's Pink Sand Beach and Malamawi Beach in Basilan, a trip to Once Islas will have you exploring some of the best islands and beaches in the peninsula called Bisaya-Bisaya, Sirommon, and Baung-Baung.

## GOING TO ONCE ISLAS: PRE-TRAVEL GUIDE

Once Islas is an eco-cultural tourism destination in Zamboanga City. It is composed of 11 islands, thus the name when translated into Chavacano. Four of these islands were opened to the public in 2018, namely Sirommon, Bisaya-Bisaya, Buh-Buh, and Baung-Baung. These were declared tourism zones by the city government, and each of these islands has beach cottages, trekking trails, kayaking, and snorkeling sites for tourists to enjoy.

The remaining seven islands are Sallangan, Simaddang, Lambang-Lambang, Baguias, Kabugan, Panganak, and Lampinigan.

The islands are mostly inhabited by the Sama Banguingui - a Moro ethnolinguistic group. With the help of the local government and local tourism agencies, they manage the 11 islands and promote tourism to create a livelihood for the locals. Once Islas is a great model of what cooperation can achieve.

Once Islas is perfect for low-impact activities like island hopping, kayaking, swimming, snorkeling, and trekking. There are no commercial establishments on the islands, so visitors will be able to fully enjoy nature.

However, visitors should be mindful of the local customs and practices by wearing modest clothing to respect the community. Beachwear is inappropriate for visiting mosques, so be sure to bring a cover-up.

## HOW TO BOOK A TOUR TO ONCE ISLAS

Once Islas limits its bookings to 200 tourists per day only. This is to ensure responsible and sustainable tourism in the 11 islands. You may book a tour at the City Tourism Office by phone at (062) 975-6341 or by email at [onceislas@gmail.com](mailto:onceislas@gmail.com). Walk-in bookings to the office are not allowed.

Once Islas is open to visitors every day except on Fridays in deference to the locals' prayer day. Island hopping is open for day tours, from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Here are the steps to book your island hopping tour:

- STEP 1** Online booking (one week before the scheduled trip) - guests will be accommodated through the email address [onceislas@gmail.com](mailto:onceislas@gmail.com). Walk-in and impromptu booking will not be entertained.
- STEP 2** Secure Booking Acknowledgment Slip (BAS) - guests are required to fill out an online booking form. Guests will receive a Booking Acknowledgment Slip to confirm the booking.
- STEP 3** Payment of entrance fee and environmental fees - only guests with BAS can pay at the City Treasurer's office. Do this two days before the scheduled trip. The payment collector will not accept the payment in the absence of BAS. The entrance fee is P100 per person, as well as the environmental fee.
- STEP 4** Upload vaccination card - only vaccinated guests are allowed on Sundays. Sunday guests must email their vaccination cards to [onceislas@gmail.com](mailto:onceislas@gmail.com). Children below 17 years old and adults 66 years old and above are not allowed unless vaccinated.

- STEP 5** Online booking (one week before the scheduled trip) - guests will be accommodated through the email address [onceislas@gmail.com](mailto:onceislas@gmail.com). Walk-in and impromptu booking will not be entertained.
- STEP 6** Health declaration - guests are required to accomplish the health declaration form upon arrival at the reception area in Barangay Panubigan.
- STEP 7** Payment of other fees - Guide Fees is P300 per group of five. Ferry rental for Island Cruise is P2,000 per group of five while the BiBa route only costs P1,200 per group of five. The cottage fee is P150.
- STEP 8** Proceed to the Barangay Panubigan Mini-Pier.

## HOW TO GET TO ZAMBOANGA CITY

Travelers can book a flight to Zamboanga via [airasia.com](http://airasia.com), [mobile.airasia.com](http://mobile.airasia.com), or the AirAsia Mobile App. AirAsia flies to Zamboanga at the following schedules:

MNL-ZAM - Two times per week (Z2 651) with a travel time of 1.4 hours. Flights depart at 8:20 a.m. and arrive at the Zamboanga International Airport at 10:00 a.m.

ZAM-MNL - Two times per week (Z2 652) with a travel time of 1.4 hours. Flights depart at 10:30 a.m. and arrive at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 4 at 12:10 p.m.

From the city proper, travelers may rent a private vehicle or take public transportation. Visitors can take a bus northbound from the Zamboanga City Integrated Bus Terminal. From Panubigan crossing, visitors can take a tricycle or habal-habal to Panubigan mini-port, the jump-off point to Once Islas.

## THINGS TO DO IN ONCE ISLAS

The islands are decorated with Vinta sails that make the experience truly Zamboanga. Before proceeding to the islands, visitors are briefed on the dos and don'ts of the island. These include:

- Overnight stay is not allowed.
- Nudity is not allowed.
- Bringing pork, alcohol, and smoking paraphernalia is not allowed.
- Littering and vandalism are not allowed. Observe cleanliness.

During our island hopping tour, our first stop was at a tidal pool right in front of Bisaya-Bisaya Island. During low tide, visitors can take a short walk to an islet with a natural tidal pool.

Popular for its white sand beach and turquoise green waters, Bisaya-Bisaya Island also has great rock formations ideal for trekking. The island has a small community that maintains the island, ensuring the place is clean including the cottages and beach area. They also sell fresh coconut juice upon request.

The calmer waves of Baung-Baung island are ideal for swimming, but the highlight of this island is the 15-minute trek to a view deck overlooking the Bisaya-Bisaya island.

Sirommon Island is known for snorkeling and diving, and has a popular sandbar perfect for beach photos and sunbathing. Visitors can enjoy a hearty meal in one of the native cottages while savoring the island's relaxing ambiance. Since this is the last stop, this island is the perfect place to have lunch or heavy snacks.

## THINGS TO BRING

- Beachwear
- Snorkeling Gear
- Sunscreen
- Food and drinks - there are no commercial establishments to buy food and drinks so visitors should pack their own food, drinks, and utensils, including reusable water bottles.
- Change of clothes - optional; to be used after a dip in the beach. Visitors can also wait until they get back to their accommodations
- Cover-ups - you'll need this if you want to visit mosques as beachwear is prohibited
- Personal Toiletries
- Electronics - bring cameras and power banks to document the tour

## ONCE ISLAS RATES AND EXPENSES

- Entrance fee: P100 per person
- Environmental fee: P100 per person
- Cottage rental fee: P150 per day
- Hiking fee in Sirommon Island: P50 per person
- Kayak rental in Bisaya-Bisaya Island: P300 per hour, for two persons
- Guide fee: P300.00 per group of five
- Boat rental fee: P1,200 to P2,000, for five persons

# POST-PANDEMIC TRAVEL: ANONG NEW TRAVEL DISCOVERIES MO?

Work-life balance is an important aspect of a healthy work environment. Work gives us the opportunity to live and learn, while life gives us the opportunity to grow and learn. Since most of our local destinations are open to tourists now, we have asked some TPB employees, who recently took time off from their daily jobs to find work-life balance, to share their post-pandemic travel discoveries.



“It was my first time to experience El Nido's charm when my close-knit group of friends and I travelled last May. El Nido is perfect for friends, backpackers, couples, and families. The trip was super fun. And the people of El Nido were all so used to handling tourists, both domestic and foreign. We became friends with the boat men on our island hopping activity and we learned about their simple but happy lives on the island. Our "barkada" became closer than ever and we are looking forward to visit other Philippine destinations (like Siargao and Iloilo) in the near future.

I was also happy to have arranged the tour for the people I love. I felt more fulfilled doing what I love about my job for them” -Miki Ochoa, ASPAC Division

“Coming back from a day trip and an overnight vacation, one thing I noticed is that Filipinos, whether tourists, establishment workers, or even ambulant sellers, are joyful and appreciative for the opportunity to travel, entertain guests, and earn money, which was not achievable during the pandemic's peak. Those journeys also reaffirmed my opinion that rest is essential to both our physical and mental health. And yes, what you've heard about #revenge travel is true: after my family's holidays, I'm even more excited to plan our next trip, which may include flying” -Pau Mancita, MARCOM



“If you want privacy and exclusivity there are other areas in Boracay to explore apart from the famous White Beach.

The Boracay Newcoast is a 150-acre property development in barangay Yapak boasting of a strip of powder white sand beach coves. The area is less crowded and away from the busy stretch of Stations 1 to 3, giving you chance to appreciate the calmness and beauty of the nature around you. Hotels in the area also offer water activities and you need not to worry about the transportation going to the white beach as hotels and resorts in the Newcoast area offer hourly transfers.

Definitely, Boracay Newcoast is a breathe of fresh air!” -Febbie Alacapa, MARCOM

“Taking family trips have always been a treat for us, more so since we are able to bring my 5-year-old niece to see different places and experience how she reacts to her every “first time.”

Our latest trip to Boracay proved to be equally thrilling not only because of the beauty of the destination but because Maya had so much fun. Her endless questions during her first plane ride, her laughter while enjoying the refreshing beach waters and powder-like white sand, and the astonishment in her eyes when she saw the fiery sunset. How she took interest in talking with other kids and amazement at the different items offered by the vendors reassured us of the social interaction skills we felt she may be missing out.

Truly, traveling is the best form of education.” -Janet Canoy, International Promotions Department

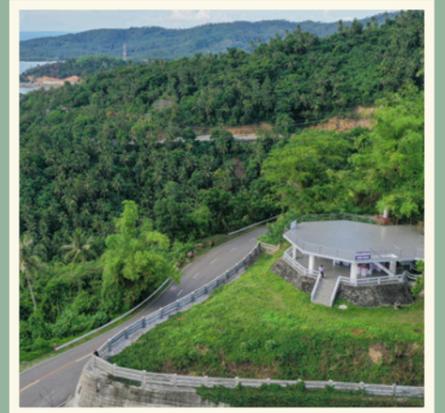


# MARINDUQUE

## YOUR NEXT DESTINATION OF CHOICE

The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines together with the Department of Tourism (DOT) recently conducted an ocular inspection in Marinduque. The inspection aimed to present Marinduque as the next destination of choice and assess its readiness to welcome tourists.

HERE'S A GLIMPSE OF WHAT'S WAITING FOR YOU IN MARINDUQUE:



# TPB's "Women's Month" Activities



Some people may not be comfortable dealing with subjects such as menstruation. Despite half of the population experiencing this biological function, this topic still faces stigma today. Nonetheless, it must be discussed as it not only concerns feminine hygiene but also gender equality and environmental conservation.

During the month of March, as the world commemorates International Women's Day, opportunities to discuss such topics come up on every platform. At the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, the month-long celebration for 2022 included a wide range of activities.

In addition to the TPB-organized webinar on feminine hygiene and sustainability, awareness campaigns through film showings, wearing purple on Tuesdays to advocate and advance women's rights and gender equality, and the distribution of information materials took place. The TPB also distributed solar power banks and menstrual cups to its employees to highlight gender roles in saving the planet.

Moreover, the TPB went beyond the confines of its office and celebrated with partners. Earlier this month, the TPB turned over 100 sets of solar power banks with accompanying screen cleaners showcasing tourism icons of the Philippines to the PCW.

In its recently concluded Regional Travel Fair (RTF) held in Bicol, TPB also included a discussion on women in tourism. "Women's role in tourism is vital, hence related issues are crucial for discussion as well," said Ms. Apple Allison Perez of womenintourism.xyz and the founder of TAAAP World who served as one of the RTF's resource speakers.

TPB regularly integrates gender and development (GAD) initiatives in its programs and projects. Earlier this year, TPB has received the approval for its GAD plan and its commitment in actively promoting gender equality.



# Millennial Resorts Achieves the First and Prestigious EDGE Certification for Resort Hospitality in the Philippines

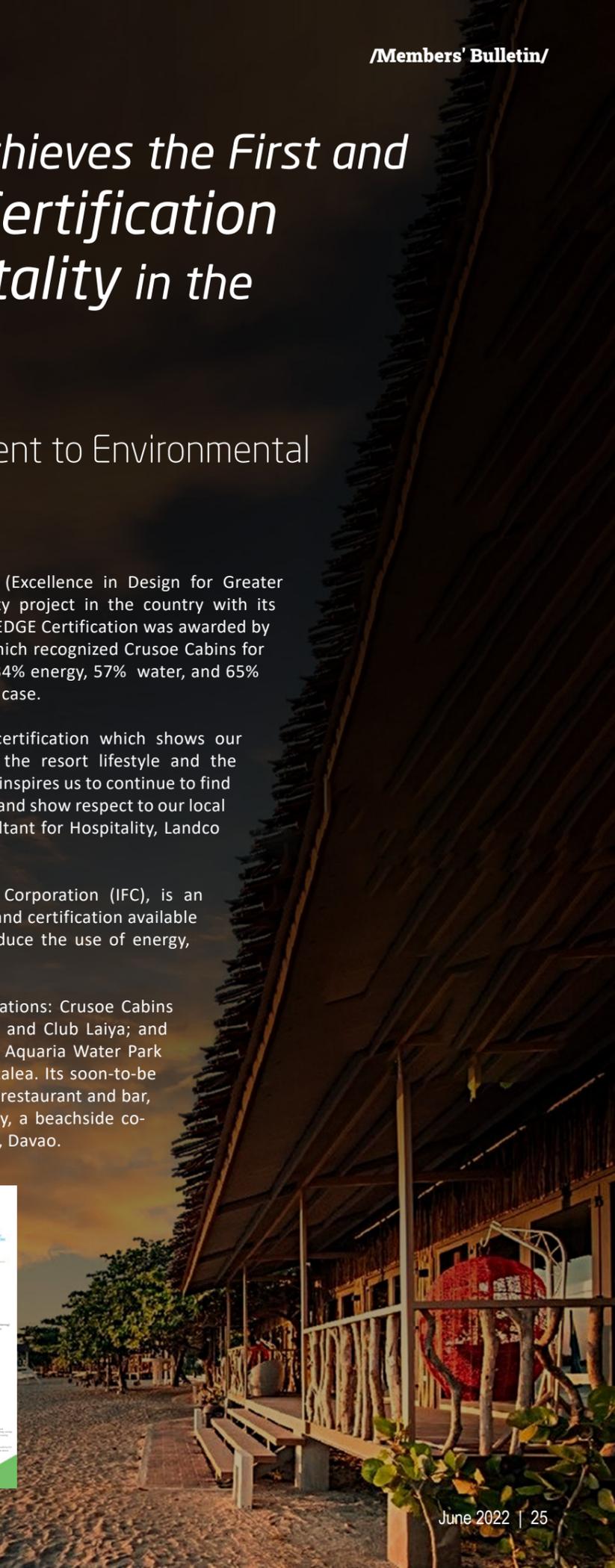
## Strengthening its Commitment to Environmental Sustainability in Batangas

Millennial Resorts achieved the very first EDGE (Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies) Certification for a resort hospitality project in the country with its Crusoe Cabins at CaSoBe in Calatagan, Batangas. The EDGE Certification was awarded by the Philippine Green Building Initiative, Inc. (PGBI) which recognized Crusoe Cabins for its eco-efficient design, resulting in the reduction of 34% energy, 57% water, and 65% embodied energy in materials compared to local base case.

"The Millennial Resorts team is grateful for this certification which shows our responsibility to the environment as we preserve the resort lifestyle and the uniqueness of the beach destination of Batangas. This inspires us to continue to find new ways to minimize our impact on the environment and show respect to our local community," stated Patrick C. Gregorio, Senior Consultant for Hospitality, Landco and MRC.

EDGE, an innovation of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), is an international green building standard, rating system, and certification available in 160 countries. EDGE brings about solutions to reduce the use of energy, water, and embodied energy in materials.

Millennial Resorts features unique resort accommodations: Crusoe Cabins at CaSoBe and Costa Azalea and Cocoons at CaSoBe and Club Laiya; and leisure facilities: Laiya Beach Club at Club Laiya and Aquaria Water Park with a three-story giant slide at CaSoBe and Costa Azalea. Its soon-to-be launched exciting new facilities are: Captain Barbozza restaurant and bar, Canopy and The Isle -- venues for events, and Colony, a beachside co-working space. Costa Azalea is located in Samal Island, Davao.



# 2022 PHITEX

PHILIPPINE TRAVEL EXCHANGE  
ResTourism: Responsible Tourism

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**OCTOBER 18-20, 2022**  
MANILA , PHILIPPINES

