



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT BUREAU
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ADVANCE COPY

MEMORANDUM

FOR : The Regional Executive Directors
DENR – Regions I to CARAGA, NCR, CAR, CALABARZON & MIMAROPA

FROM : The Director

SUBJECT : **ONLINE ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP ON THE IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN PROTECTED AREAS**

Ecotourism development is among the programs being implemented in protected areas that have been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020. Most prevalent is the closing of protected areas to the visitors to prevent the spread of the virus which resulted in the decrease in annual income of the local communities living within and adjacent protected areas who are previously earning from tour guiding, birding, portering, and food and souvenir selling. These impacts were further affirmed during the three-part webinar series conducted by the BMB and BioFin Project in August to September of this year.

While at the site level, the various PA Management Boards, Regional Ecotourism Committees (REC) and DENR Field Offices are exploring strategies to adopt to the new normal, the Ecotourism Technical Working Group and National Ecotourism Steering Committee at the national level are actively discussing strategies to address the impacts of the pandemic to the ecotourism in PAs and to be able to build back better. The updating of the National Ecotourism Strategy and Action Plan (2013-2022) is also an opportunity to mainstream these strategies along with the need to revisit existing guidelines governing ecotourism in PAs. In this regard, the BMB intends to conduct an Online Assessment Workshop on the Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Ecotourism Development Program in protected areas which specifically aims to:

1. Provide updates on the status of ecotourism sites/activities in protected areas;
2. Establish a venue for learning exchange on the experiences and strategies that have been implemented by the Protected Area Superintendents in order to cope up with the effects of the pandemic;
3. Identify issues and concerns encountered in the implementation of the ecotourism program during the pandemic and provide recommendations to address the same; and
4. Identify strategies for consideration in the updating of the NESAP.

The Workshop will be held on 23-25 November 2021 via zoom with details including the program flow provided in the attachment. Relative thereto, may we invite representatives from your respective Conservation and Development Division (CDD), Planning Management Division and the Protected Area Superintendents (PASus) of protected areas with existing ecotourism development and activities. Attached is a copy of the draft Special Order for your ready reference. In addition, may we also request that you invite representatives from your respective RECs to participate in the Workshop.

May we also request the Chief of your respective CDDs to do the presentation on the consolidated status of ecotourism development program in your Regions including the issues, concerns, and policy recommendations. Please find the attached template for your reference.

For coordination and other concerns, you may contact this Bureau's National Parks Division through Mr. Gabriel Anthony Ferrer and Ms. Angeline Villalba at npd@bmb.gov.ph, gabriel.ferrer@bmb.gov.ph or angeline.villalba@bmb.gov.ph.

For information and consideration.

DATU TUNGKO M. SAIKOL