

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
OFFICE: DOT MIMAROPA REGION



Meeting Report					
Subject/Title: MIMAROPA Regional Tourism Committee (MRTC) and Regional Ecotourism Committee 2nd Qtr. Meeting					
Date	June 24, 2021	Time Started	1:00 pm	Time Finished	5:40 pm
Location/ Venue	Virtual Meeting via the Zoom Application				
Attendees:					
Members:					
1. RD Christopher V. Morales – DOT / MRTC Chairperson					
2. RED Maria Lourdes Ferrer– DENR / REC Chairperson					
3. RD Mario Baquilod – DOH					
4. Ms. Karen Leander – DTI					
5. PBGEN Celso Bael – PNP					
6. Ms. Jobelle Cruzado – NEDA					
7. Ms. Ma. Eunice Delos Santos– DBM					
8. Engr. Michael Ras – DILG					
9. Atty. Argelique M. Divino – MARINA					
10. Ms. Kenneth Montenegro– DSWD					
11. Ms. Ma. Isabel Castillo – Mindoro Occidental					
12. Mr. Dhon Calda – Mindoro Oriental					
13. Ms. Sandi Rodenas – Romblon					
14. Ms. Maribel Buñi – Palawan					
15. Mr. Demetrio Alvior – Puerto Princesa City					
16. Mr. Christian Gaud – Calapan City					
17. Mr. Rodne Galicha – Private Sector Representative					
Secretariat					
1. Ms. Gladys Quesea					
2. Ms. Faye Angeli Reyes					
3. Ms. Abigail Cruz					
4. Ms. Danica Nepomuceno					
68 % of MRTC member agencies were present during the meeting. (17 out of 25)					
Summary of Points Discussed					
Opening Statement	Asec. Christopher Morales highlighted the meeting as the first joint meeting with the Regional Ecotourism Committee headed by DENR Regional Director Ma. Lourdes Ferrer. The joint meeting aims to apply a holistic approach to address all the issues and concerns under the tourism industry. He also noted that the topics to be discussed under the REC meeting are very crucial and relevant. Asec. Christopher Morales chaired the meeting. He informed the group of the meeting's agenda:				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update on COVID19 in MIMAROPA b. Update on the Bayanihan Act 2 budget allotted for the procurement of COVID testing equipment and infrastructure c. Licensing Requirements to Operate a COVID Laboratory Facility d. Update on the Mandanas Ruling: Affected NGAs and Functions to be Devolved e. Status of Quarantine in the Tourism Destinations f. Requirements for Foreshore Lease Agreement (FLA), and Forest Land-use Agreement for Tourism (FLAgT) applications; and List of Approved FLAs and FLAgT g. Update on the harmonization of the issuance of Waste Water Discharge permit <p>DENR RED Ma. Lourdes Ferrer requested for the REC to be an integral component of the MRTC, as matters and concerns on environmental aspects she believes should be discussed in a single meeting.</p>
<p>Updates on COVID-19</p> <p>a. Confirmed Cases in MIMAROPA and Status of Health Care System including the Temporary Treatment and Monitoring Facilities (TTMFs)</p>	<p>Ms. Cherrie Candava represented DOH 4B and reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The total number of COVID cases in MIMAROPA is at 12,160 and 1,382 of which were identified as active cases. Oriental Mindoro has the highest number of active cases of 533 as of June 23, 2021 and 134 or 85.4% have recovered. A total of 276 deaths or a 2.3% case fatality rate has been recorded in the region; the majority are male, senior citizens or with comorbidities. ➤ The region has already tested a total of 55,801 individuals and currently has 21% positivity rate. Puerto Princesa City has the highest positivity rate which may be due to the City's high testing capacity. ➤ A slow but continuous decrease in the rise of cases is evident except for the provinces of Romblon and Marinduque per the latest combined Average Daily Attack Rate (ADAR) and 2-Week Growth Rate. Oriental Mindoro and Palawan were also identified as areas with clustering of cases. ➤ The exposure happening at home is still relatively high. Home quarantine remains a concern in terms of community transmission where possible exposure of other household members is happening that likely infect others in the community through face-to-face interactions, going to workplaces, and/or attending ordinary gatherings or events. ➤ Of the total active cases, 39% are in TTMFs, 35% are in hospitals and 26% are in home quarantine. Ideally, only 10% should be in home quarantine to avoid exposure to other household members.

<p>b. Updates on the Bayanihan Act 2 budget allotted for the procurement of COVID testing equipment and infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ On HealthCare Utilization, the occupancy for ICU beds, isolation beds, COVID positive beds and TTMFs are low, except in Occidental Mindoro (ICU) and Oriental Mindoro (COVID positive beds). There are no ICU beds in Marinduque and Romblon. Region-wide, more than half of all active cases admitted in hospitals are mild and asymptomatic. ➤ The following are the recommendations of DOH for the LGUS: 1. review the current COVID response and identify issues and concerns in the implementation of the minimum health standards, adequate contact tracing and trained contact tracers especially in areas with continuing clustering of cases. 2. enforce the DOH recommended isolation and quarantine protocols such as discouraging home quarantine, improving the status of the available quarantine facilities, highly encourage close-contacts to self-report and transferring mild and asymptomatic cases to TTMFs. 3. Use of RT-PCR test for more reliable data. ➤ RD Baquilod responded that they will raise the query of Asec Morales on additional accommodation establishments applying as TTMFs, in their meeting with Oriental Mindoro. in consideration of the province's health care utilization rate of hospital beds at almost 89% and with an increase in the cases in Romblon and Marinduque. ➤ Asec. Morales also suggested that close coordination is necessary between Puerto Princesa City and the RTF for additional available TTMFs in the city, with a number of Returning Overseas Filipinos expected to arrive in the city. ➤ RD Baquilod to raise the proposition of Mr. Dhon Calda from Oriental Mindoro to the vaccination point person for the consideration of tourism frontliners to be vaccinated in the A4 category. Accommodation establishments in the province are willing to operate as TTMFs but its staff are still in line for vaccination delaying their operation. RD Baquilod however, assures him that stocks will be available for them. <p>On updates of the Bayanihan Act 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Budget allotted for the procurement of COVID testing equipment and infrastructure, confirmed cases who are already recovering or are asymptomatic are transferred to TTMFs. ➤ Hospital rooms are reserved for those with moderate to severe cases. ➤ RD Baquilod noted that all provinces are allocated a budget of PHP 10M for the construction of TTMF
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<p>c. Licensing Requirements to Operate a COVID Laboratory Facility</p>	<p>facilities. The status and expected dates of completion of these TTMFs and Molecular Laboratories with Medical equipment were presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ RD Baquilod stated that DOH can provide the costing of acquiring negative pressure in response to Ms. Gladys Quesea's inquiry. <p>RD Baquilod also discussed the guidelines in securing a license to operate a COVID-19 testing laboratory in the Philippines; which included the hiring of required trained personnel such as a licensed pathologist and medical technician. The lack of such personnel is among the challenges in some provinces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Asec. Morales suggested that the proposition to add collection booths to airports and port areas, so as to decrease the need to build and establish a separate testing lab be raised during the RITF meeting. ➤ On the status of the current number of TTMFs in the region, RD Baquilod mentioned that the region has a total of 121 active facilities, however, he mentioned that there are no identified TTMF in Marinduque. ➤ The list and the status of the application of the accommodation establishments endorsed by the DOT to DOH which signified their interest to apply as a TTMF was presented by RD Baquilod. ➤ Asec. Morales noted that in case of a surge, there may be a need to identify and encourage these accommodation establishments to continue their application as a TTMF. DOT 4B is to also provide this list to the LGU. ➤ On Ms. Quesea's inquiry regarding compliance with the licensing requirements for the molecular laboratories, RD Baquilod clarified that Coron District Hospital, will be handled by the Provincial government while El Nido, Community Hospitals are handled by the Municipal government. RD clarified that it will still need confirmation. He also mentioned that two COVID facilities are handled by the DOH namely the OMP and Culion. The rest are under the local government. ➤ Private sector Representative Mr. Rodne Galicha suggested for DOH to provide accessible data with the list of identified tourism destinations from DOT and corresponding number of COVID19 cases per destination. RD Baquilod responded that the DOH provides the status of COVID19 cases per barangay and that the region's active cases are 99% local transmission and 1% imported elsewhere.
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<p>Update on the Mandanas Ruling: Affected NGAs and Functions to be Devolved</p>	<p>Ms. Ma. Eunice R. Delos Santos from DBM presented the Implementation of the Supreme Court decision on the Mandanas-Garcia Petitions and the salient features of Executive Order No. 138. The following were mentioned on her presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ LGUs shall have a just share, as determined by law, in the National taxes which shall be automatically released to them. ➤ The devolved functions must permanently be taken out from the National Agencies to empower the LGU to assume them. The devolution of functions will put an end to the long problem of the duplication of responsibilities and financing of programs and projects between the National Government and the LGUs. ➤ Departments and agencies are directed to prepare and implement a Devolution Transition Plan which shall be submitted to the DBM for evaluation and approval within 120 days after the effectiveness of the Executive Order. ➤ The National Government Agencies Devolution Transition Plans shall identify and clarify the functions and services devolved to the LGUs by level of LGU based on RA 7160 and other relevant laws. While the LGUs should likewise prepare their respective transition plan in close coordination with the National Government Agencies concerned. ➤ The Development Budget Coordination Committee to provide the implementing rules and regulation for allocation and release of the Growth Equity Fund (GEF). The GEF shall be subject to mechanisms and guidelines issued by the DBCC for the equitable performance based and time bound allocation and distribution of funds to the LGUs. ➤ Asec. Morales mentioned that the DOT is tasked as a department to have the devolution plan as part of the transition in response to Mr. Galicha's suggestion for the committee to start working on the transition of devolution to know the boundaries and limitations of the department to be transferred to the LGUs in detail. ➤ Mr. Galicha noted challenges in the transition such as the lack of institutionalized offices of the LGUs and plantilla positions ➤ Asec. Morales agreed to the concern raised by Mr. Calda on the submission of 2022 Annual Investment Program requiring the attachment of National Devolution Plan. He mentioned that there is indeed a need for a Devolution Plan before proceeding with the
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	<p>Annual Investment Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ms. Jobelle Cruzado from NEDA clarified that in formulating the Annual Investment Plan, only the needs of the department for that certain year should be addressed regardless if the funding source is yet to be available. Mr. Calda replied that they are hoping to submit the Annual Investment Plan by the month of July which will compel them to submit missing documents. He expressed the difficulty in their end as there is a need to wait for the call from the NGA to craft their own DTP. ➤ Ms. Delos Santos answered that for the implementing rules and other guidelines, these are still in the process of finalizing. These are expected to be released by the last week of June or in the month of July. Concern such as the deadlines of submission will be relayed to the central office.
Status of Quarantine in the Tourism Destinations	<p>After the presentation of DBM, the region's Provincial Tourism Officers and City Tourism Officers provided updates on the quarantine classifications of their respective provinces and cities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ms. Isabel Castillo represented Occidental Mindoro and reported that the province is currently placed under MGCQ status, as declared in the IATF Resolution No. 118-A until June 30, 2021. The province follows the quarantine classification set by the IATF and has yet to open for domestic tourists. The Provincial tourism office has also organized a Core group which drafted an Executive Order on the protocols for the reopening of tourist destinations for domestic tourists. This is currently under review by the provincial IATF in preparation for the province's re-opening. ➤ For the province of Oriental Mindoro, Mr. Dhon Calda narrated the requirements needed for entry based on Executive Order No. 16-B. The province is currently under MGCQ status and only accepts domestic tourists in the municipality of Puerto Galera and Calapan City. ➤ On ASEC Morales' inquiry on the province's tourist arrivals, Mr. Calda answered that there is indeed a big gap from the number of tourist arrivals before and during the pandemic. In the new normal, he believes that the antigen test requirement being costly is also a big factor for the small rate of tourist arrivals in Oriental Mindoro. ➤ Ms. Sandi Rodenas presented the Updates on the number of COVID19 cases and the travel guidelines for essential travel in the province of Romblon. As of this day, tourists are still not accepted, due to the spike of cases in the Province.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ms. Maribel Buñi followed on to present the status of Quarantine Facilities and Travel Restrictions in the Province of Palawan. Currently, the province is classified under MGCQ however, some LGUs are requesting to be reclassified depending on the situation. Antigen tests are also required in some municipalities and granular lockdowns are also imposed in a few areas. Point-to-point travel is also allowed as long as approved. Ms. Buñi also happily reported that a decrease in COVID cases is evident based on the SITREP report. Updates on the total number of TTMFs are also to be provided to the DOH. ➤ Ms. Buñi also mentioned that the community-based tour guides in Mt. Victoria in the municipality of Narra are requesting approval to be included in the A4 category for vaccination. They are hoping that all guides be vaccinated before re-opening the site. ASEC Morales advised if the LGU can assist with the request and the DOT will also push for approval. ➤ Following the presentation of Ms. Buñi, Mr. Alvior presented the updates of Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. The city is classified under MECQ quarantine status until June 30, 2021. Tourism activities are prohibited. ➤ In terms of testing, Mr. Alvior stated that antigen tests are counted as credible as RT PCR tests in the city since the start of the surge last March and due to the shortage in supply of RT PCR test kits. RT PCR tests are only used for severe cases. Mr. Alvior also stated that a possible cause of the surge last March was due to the removal of the quarantine requirement for inbound travelers. Since the implementation of the MECQ, the city is seeing a decrease in the number of COVID cases. ➤ The last update was presented by Mr. Gaud, the City Tourism Officer of Calapan City in Oriental Mindoro. Mr. Gaud shared that the Calapan City has recorded a total of 1,708 cases and 178 active cases as of June 22, 2021. Currently, Calapan City is also under MGCQ status. ➤ The city has yet to receive applications from Tourism-related establishments (TREs) to apply as a temporary quarantine facility. He suggested DOH to have the staff of those TREs willing to apply as TTMFs be prioritized for vaccination in order to persuade more establishments.
Next Steps/Remarks	
1. DOH to provide DOT with a cost-basis and specifications of Negative Pressure.	

2. DOT to encourage accommodation establishments to continue their application as TTMF

Prepared by: MRTC Secretariat