

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
OFFICE: DOT MIMAROPA REGION



Meeting Report					
Subject/Title: MIMAROPA Regional Tourism Committee (MRTC) 3rd Qtr. Meeting					
Date	September 23, 2022	Time Started	09:30 am	Time Finished	12:00 pm
Location/ Venue	Virtual Meeting via the Zoom Application				
Attendees:					
Members					
1. ATTY. BEVIENNE G. MALATEO – DOT / MRTC CHAIRPERSON					
2. MR. BERNARDO ATIENZA – NEDA / VICE CHAIRPERSON					
3. MS. JOBELLE M. CRUZADO - NEDA					
4. MS. ANNA CENA – DBM					
5. MS. JULIE N. TANGUILIG – DENR					
6. ENGR. MICHAEL RAS II – DILG					
7. MS. ATHENA COLLINE L. VERDEY – DOST					
8. MR. JONATHAN LACXAMANA – DTI					
9. MS. CHERRIE ROSE L. DESALIZA – TESDA					
10. MR. PAT WENDEL VAN, CUENCA – PRO					
11. ENGR. JN SOBREVEGA – MARINA					
12. MS. KIMBERLY MAE E. VELASQUEZ – ORIENTAL MINDORO PROVINCE					
13. MS. SANDI PATTI G. RODENAS – ROMBLON					
14. MS. MARIBEL C. BUÑI – PALAWAN					
15. MR. DEMETRIO ALVOR JR. – PUERTO PRINCESA CITY					
Secretariat					
1. MS. GLADYS A. QUESEA					
2. MS. FAYE ANGELI A. REYES					
3. MS. ABIGAIL CRUZ					
60 % of MRTC member agencies were present during the meeting. (15 out of 25)					
Summary of Points Discussed					
Opening Statement	Atty. Bevienne G. Malateo, Regional Director of DOT MIMAROPA, acknowledged and greeted the attendees for the third quarter meeting. RD Malateo discussed briefly the highlights of the 2 nd quarter meeting of MRTC last June 14, 2022. The following are the MRTC Meeting Agenda: 1. Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) Requirements 2. Results/Status of the Carrying Capacity Study in Puerto Princesa Underground River 3. Updates on Ongoing and Proposed Tourism Infrastructure Projects of TIEZA 4. Updates on Peace Village Development Project of DOT MIMAROPA				

Approval of the Highlights of the 2 nd Quarter MRTC Meeting	The Highlights of the 2 nd Quarter MRTC Meeting were approved.
Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) Requirements for Tourism, Heritage Development, Culture, and the Arts	<p>Engr. Michael Ras II discussed the parameters used in the SGLG assessment. There are no stand-alone parameters for Tourism. It is part of the Category: Tourism, Heritage Development, Culture, and the Arts.</p> <p>Under the sub-category, where Tourism is a significant industry, the LGUs must comply with at least two of any of the three parameters, namely;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presence of a Local Tourism Office or Officer; 2. Tourist Information and Assistance Center or Desks; and 3. Tracking system of tourism data <p>DILG defined LGU as a Tourism Significant Industry when, (a) LGUs main source of revenue is from tourism activities; (b) a large segment of LGU's population is employed in tourism activities; (c) fund assistance is provided by the LGU for the development of this industry; or (d) "Philippine Tourism" brand-destination of the DOT are located.</p> <p>For the sub-category Cultural Heritage Promotion and Conservation, at least three of any of the four parameters, namely;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presence of a local council for culture and the arts; 2. At least 75% utilization rate of budget appropriated for the conservation and preservation of cultural property for CY 2021 3. Presence of cultural property inventory 4. Documented and published narrative of history and culture <p>About the creation of the Local Tourism Council, Engr. Ras discussed the DILG issuance, Memorandum Circular No. 1995-162 dated 2 October 1995 by then Secretary Rafael M. Alunan III. He emphasized that this was not a requirement in the SGLG criteria. When the SGLG criteria were being established, the DOT provided the above-mentioned parameters included in the SGLG.</p> <p>However, he suggested that in order to strengthen the parameters of the Tourism category, we can also incorporate the creation of the Local Tourism Council in addition to the three (3) parameters to review the sustainability of tourism programs.</p> <p>Ms. Gladys Quesea of DOT MIMAROPA asked Engr. Ras if the DILG has the intention of amending the said MC to update the composition as well as the duties and responsibilities of the Local Tourism Council. Engr. Ras replied that the DILG issuances are based on the issuances of the concerned agencies. If there is a need to amend the said MC, the initiative</p>

	<p>must come from the concerned Secretary through the Cabinet Meeting on how to strengthen the implementation of tourism at the LGU level. Further, he claimed that the basis of the said MC was the Local Government Code Sec. 17.</p> <p>RD Malateo decided that our office will prepare recommendations for the revision of the MC through the Secretary in view of the parameters used to assess the LGUs are no longer updated. The DOT MIMAROPA shall coordinate with DILG MIMAROPA if there's a need to have another meeting.</p> <p>Engr. Ras replied to Ms. Quesea's follow-up question if DILG considers an all-private members Tourism Council, the DILG strictly implements the MC that it shall be represented by both government and private sectors. Likewise, Ms. Maribel Buñi of the Palawan Government asked Engr. Ras that due to the new administration they are in the process of reconstituting special bodies, will they not follow the 60% private and 40% government composition of the Tourism Council. However, Engr. Ras apologized for not being aware of the 60/40 composition though he requested information from Ms. Buñi if there is an issuance. But Ms. Buñi cannot confirm either where the issuance came from. On the other hand, Ms. Buñi suggested with Engr. Ras that the DILG Monitoring Team has knowledge of the "Philippine Tourism Brand" parameters.</p>
Results/Status of the Carrying Capacity (CarCap) Study in Puerto Princesa Underground River	<p>Mr. Jan Marrion Cadelino of the DENR-Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) presented the Results and Status of the Carrying Capacity (CarCap) Study in the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park (PPSRNP), a key biodiversity, an important bird area, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and a highly National Geological Monument, an Ancient Heritage Site, and one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature. 22,000 hectares of terrestrial and mercury waters. And compassing four rural barangays in Puerto Princesa namely; Tagabinet, Cabayugan, Marufinas, and New Panggaan.</p> <p>The study was conducted through the marching order of former DENR Secretary Cimatú during the 2nd Environmental Summit in Cebu in 2018. The CarCap study for PPSRNP was conducted in 2019-2020 to update the existing carrying capacity protocol of the PPSRNP in relation to its current ecological condition. In the 2010 study, the PPSRNP came up with 1,200 visitors per day. While the updated study includes determining the different land uses surrounding the PPSRNP including those associated with anthropogenic activities; measuring the various physio-chemical properties of the Puerto-Princesa Subterranean Underground River (PPUR) and its tributaries; Updating the existing carrying capacity policies/protocol of the PPSRNP integrating the ecological dimension. The study was guided by the methodological framework derived from the ERDB manual on</p>

carrying capacity study for sustainable tourism destinations. Mr. Cadelino informed the body that the updated Manual on Carrying Capacity is available in their office.

The study was in collaboration and coordination with PASu, PENRO, Palawan Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD), LGU-Puerto Princesa City, and Indigenous Peoples' representatives. His discussions focused on the description of the study site, and water quality in identified 12 sampling stations outside the cave and inside the navigable river path. Likewise, the measurement of carbon dioxide, oxygen concentration, and relative humidity of the PPUR using an RS-967 CO2 detector were taken at the same sampling stations. Further, in updating the existing CarCap, the ERDB considered the tourism activities such as river cruises, trekking at the monkey jungle trail, swimming, and beach activities in Sabang beach. The parameter values used in computing the CarCap per activity mentioned were also discussed.

Toward the end of Mr. Cadelino's presentation, the following were the recommendations of the ERDB derived from the study:

On Water Quality,

1. Having a high concentration of fecal coliform, it is recommended that any contact recreation activity within PPUR cave shall be strictly prohibited. Visitors are required to remain on the *bancas* during the river cruise activity.
2. Classification standards of the water bodies of the PPUR must be prioritized, as this will serve as a benchmark to keep its water quality within DENR standards.

On Air Quality

1. Continue the air quality monitoring study to determine the association of CO2 concentrations, bat colony/population, quality of guano, and the number of tourists.

On Biodiversity

1. As bats are sensitive to light and noises, light must only be maneuvered by the guide who drives the boat. Visitors must be prohibited from using other light sources (phones or similar devices).
2. Legislation enacting broader-reaching policies to safeguard rapidly decreasing natural forests and limit chemical use in agricultural areas within the protected areas.
3. Restricting access to identified roost caves for bat protection and conservation during the breeding season. To also determine the bat population's seasonal roosts, habitats, and foraging range, and consider protecting them.

On Carrying Capacity

1. Revisit the PAMB resolution that set the park's 1200 visitors per day capacity.
2. Increase the publicity of other tourism activities such as the monkey jungle trail and mangrove paddling boat

within the PPSRNP to avoid anthropic pressure in river cruise activity in the PPUR cave.

3. Adequate tourism facilities such as holding and waiting areas are recommended to avoid overcrowding. Policies shall also be enforced during embarkation and disembarkation to alleviate crowding.

Ms. Gladys Quesea asked Mr. Cadelino for the timeline in order to complete a CarCap study. Mr. Cadelino answered that on average and if all necessary data is readily available, it would take 6 months to one year to compute the carrying capacity. The timeline will also depend on the tourist destination.

RD Malateo asked about the minimum requirements for tourism destinations to request for a CarCap study from DENR. Mr. Cadelino replied that LGUs may request from DENR directly through a proposal. RD Malateo followed that if such LGU would request for a CarCap study through a third-party service, would it still be recognized by the DENR. Mr. Cadelino responded that the study will indeed still be considered by the DENR.

Ms. Quesea asked if the results derived from the CarCap study are implemented by the LGUs. Mr. Cadelino answered that the DENR will present the result to the LGU and the discretion to use such data will depend on the LGU's prerogative.

Engr. Ras recommended that the ERDB shall come-up with a specific recommendation which relays the LGU with parameters for monitoring. He also recommended that the agency should come up with a position paper to strengthen the implementation based on the results. Mr. Cadelino agreed and also suggested devising a resolution adopting this figure.

Ms. Athena Verdey of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) MIMAROPA suggested also providing recommendations for the Regional Line Agencies to undertake.

RD Malateo agreed and added that the LGUs may not also be equipped with enough resources to carry out the recommendations of the ERDB.

Mr. Bernardino Atienza of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) agreed to the statement of RD Malateo and added that damages to tourism sites may also occur if the LGUs are unable to execute the recommendations derived from the CarCap study.

He asked Mr. Cadelino if there are sites that are prioritized for the CarCap study from the DENR. Mr. Cadelino responded that the DENR has identified "5 gems plus 1" sites for prioritization. Boracay is the pilot site. He added that the agency extended a manual to guide the LGUs in conducting their own CarCap study. The ERDB also accepts requests for training.

	<p>Mr. Cadelino added that the ERDB does not have any mandate for the LGUs in adopting the results of the study. He then suggested assistance from the regional line agencies by creating a resolution for LGUs to adopt the results of the CarCap study.</p>
<p>Updates on Ongoing and Proposed Tourism Infrastructure Projects of TIEZA</p>	<p>The Updates on the Ongoing and Proposed Tourism Infrastructure Projects of the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) were presented by AR. Joana Marie P. Tuano.</p> <p>AR. Tuano briefly narrated the status, budget allocation, scope, and locations covering the TIEZA projects of the region.</p> <p>Projects included in the Province of Oriental Mindoro are the rehabilitation of the Tamaraw Falls, the sewerage wastewater facility and boardwalk development in Puerto Galera; the development of Naujan Lake in Socorro, the development of the Mini-Park and Baywalk along the seawall in Pinamlayan; and the development of Sukol River in Bongabong.</p> <p>In Occidental Mindoro, the projects named were the restoration of Cabra Spanish Lighthouse in Cabra Island; the Caridan Ecotourism and Biodiversity Project in Sta. Cruz; the development of Gumaer Falls in Mamburao; and the construction of the San Jose Boardwalk Phase I and Phase II.</p> <p>Moving forward to the Province of Palawan, the projects stated for Busuanga Island were the tourist service center in the Municipality of Busuanga, construction of wastewater treatment facilities; construction of housing for the hyperbaric chamber, supply, delivery & installation of solar street lights; and modular floating docks in Coron.</p> <p>For Puerto Princesa City, the modular floating docks and the Tagkawayan Beach Tourism Development Project were mentioned. In the Municipality of El Nido, the construction of housing for the hyperbaric chamber was presented.</p> <p>For San Vicente, the TIEZA design and build for the construction of the modular docking facility and the infrastructure projects in San Vicente Flagship TEZ, which included the Port Barton TAC and the Alimanguan TAC were discussed. The New Tubbataha Ranger and Research Station (TRARES) project in Cagayancillo was also mentioned.</p> <p>Projects included in the Province of Romblon were the Libertad Mangrove Forestland Aqua AquaCulture facilities and the Tumatabu Ba Passage development in Odiongan. For Marinduque, the rehabilitation of public restrooms and water supply systems in Poctoy, Torrijos was mentioned.</p> <p>AR. Tuano then noted that the majority of the funding of the projects in the region were suspended due to the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act.</p>

	<p>Ms. Quesea asked if the Phase I of the STP in Puerto Galera is already operational. AR. Tuana mentioned that updates on the statuses of the projects may be requested through a request letter.</p> <p>Mr. Atienza asked if there is prioritization of the projects as many requests are pending. AR. Tuano responded that implementation of new projects are dependent on travel tax collections and were affected by the pandemic. The agency is hoping to bounce back through the increasing number of travel tax collections. The TIEZA are currently prioritizing suspended projects pre-pandemic but are still accepting new proposals</p>
Peace Village Development Project	<p>Mr. Marc Ramiro Ortiz Luis, Tourism Operations Officer II of the DOT MIMAROPA, briefly discussed the updates of the Peace Village Development Project of the regional office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mr. Ortiz Luis mentioned that the main goal of this initiative is to promote productivity and resiliency among communities regardless how diverse their culture and norms are. ➤ The planning and development of peace villages will greatly help the tourism industry and other industries in promoting inclusive-growth, peace and order, safety and security and will add to the promotion of diverse cultures of the Filipino communities in the region. ➤ Mr. Ortiz Luis also narrated the key objectives of the project which includes the strengthening of cultural identities through tourism developments, promotion of gender-sensitive community by GAD initiatives and women empowerment, safety and security initiatives among communities, preservation of cultural identities and local livelihood, enhancement of equitable distribution of income through the Page 8 of identification of potential or existing local products for development, and boosting of tourism attractions and activities through peace village (Cultural Tourism). ➤ Mr. Ortiz Luis also mentioned that the regional office has initiated a pre-assessment in the provinces of Occidental Mindoro (Mangyan Communities), Oriental Mindoro (Hanunuo Mangyan), and Palawan (Palawan Tribe and Panlaitan Village) last August 2022. The tribes mentioned were upon the recommendations of the Provincial Government Offices. ➤ The regional office is also set to conduct tourism rapid assessments and Gap/Needs Analysis in the communities of Brooke's Point in Palawan, San Jose and Magsaysay in Occidental Mindoro, and Bulalacao and Mansalay in Oriental Mindoro. The office shall also invite Regional Line Agencies (RLAs) on scheduled site validation for identification of interventions based on respective mandates and projects.

Next Steps/Remarks
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. DOT MIMAROPA to coordinate with DOT Central on the recommended composition of the Regional and Local Tourism Council. Strengthen the parameters of the SGLG.2. DENR-ERDB to provide recommendations for regional line agencies and LGUs on the resulting data from the Carrying Capacity studies.3. DENR-ERDB is to be invited to the 4th Quarter MRTC meeting to present the Carrying Capacity results of the Municipalities of Coron and Puerto Galera.

Prepared by: MRTC Secretariat