

## **MEMORANDUM**

**FOR** : The Director  
In concurrent capacity as Assistant Secretary for Policy,  
Planning and Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects

**THRU** : The OIC Assistant Director  
In concurrent capacity as Chief, Coastal and Marine Division  
  
The Section Chief, ICMPS

**FROM** : The Undersigned CMD Staff

**SUBJECT** : **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONDUCT OF THE FOLLOW-UP  
ONLINE MEETING OF THE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE  
MARINE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK AND LAW  
ENFORCEMENT NETWORK (VIP MPAN AND LEN) ON MAY 4,  
2023, 3:00-5:00 PM**

**DATE** :

## **BACKGROUND**

1. On 24-25 April 2023, the VIP MPAN and LEN 4th Secretariat Meeting and 3rd Management Board Meeting were held in Batangas City. During the meeting, members of the board arrive at a conclusion that the Verde Island Passage is already a part of the National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) as an initial component. As part of the next steps, the DENR shall convene the interim PAMB to proceed with the necessary steps toward legislating the Verde Island Passage.

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

2. The BMB conducted and hosted a follow-up online meeting on the results of the VIP MPAN and LEN Board Meeting on 4 May 2023 attended by the representatives from the DENR Regional and Field Offices, Provincial LGUs, and BMB with the presence of OIC Assistant Director Armida P. Andres. Please see Annex A and Annex B for the complete list and photographs of attendees/participants.
3. The online meeting aims to a) discuss the highlights of the VIP MPAN and LEN Management Board meeting; b) discuss the preparations for the implementation of EO 578 under the NIPAS track; and c) discuss other matters.

4. The online meeting was started by the introduction of all the participants and a short welcome message by AD Armida P. Andres as she expressed gratitude to all who were able to take time to join the said meeting even on short notice. This was immediately followed by the presentation of the highlights of the VIP MPAN and LEN Management Board Meeting. Towards the end of the presentation, it was in a way clarified that the next step was to convene an interim PAMB meeting which necessitates the conduct of the online meeting.
5. The next discussion was on the appropriate membership of the VIP Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) in accordance with the NIPAS Act. It was underscored that the EO 578 serves as the basis for VIP to be recognized as an initial component of the NIPAS pursuant to Section 5 Republic Act No. 11038 or the Expanded NIPAS Act of 2018. EO 578 provided for the supposed composition of the Task Force and the role of the private sector and civil society to ensure the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of its biological diversity
6. It was also mentioned that the VIP MPAN and LEN Management Board was provided for in the Memorandum of Agreement forged by the five (5) Provincial Governors within VIP, the DENR Secretary, PCG, PNP Maritime Group, and Conservation International-Philippines wherein they themselves became the members of the Board.
7. As one of the points for discussion, a matrix of the possible PAMB composition was presented i.e., the MPAN Board, the composition of the task force based on EO 578, and the composition of PAMB based on the ENIPAS Act.
8. Considering that the VIP is the biggest NIPAS PA once legislated, AD Andres expressed the need to strategize the approach in terms of its membership at the moment and recommended that the MPAN Board can serve as the Ad Hoc/Interim PAMB as this is more feasible. Once the Interim PAMB is convened, it can tackle urgent matters such as the clearances for development projects, marine spatial planning, and the initial PA Plan. In addition, AD Andres mentioned that as a matter of priority, the DENR needs the support of partner LGUs in the conduct of orientation and PASA.
9. Batangas PGENRO Mr. Luis Awitan recommended that while the VIP MPAN and LEN are composed of the Governors, we should add the Municipal government because the municipal waters are their concern, and there are no provincial waters. AD Andres agreed to the recommendation.
10. Ms Marilyn Alcanices of Oriental Mindoro Provincial Agriculture Office (PAgO) inquired about one of the agreements in the previous VIP Meetings, in particular, the harmonization of policies, i.e., LG Code RA 10654, RA 7568 as amended by RA 11038. AD Andres replied that the board can review policies, but after the legislation, municipal waters will be treated as NIPAS waters, as indicated in the provisions of NIPAS and LG Code. However, she added that within the bounds of law and given the complexity of VIP, an arrangement can be explored to make sure that LGUs will be given leeway to implement local plans for their coastal areas.

11. Atty. Kathrine A. Gonzales of the Office of the Provincial Legal Officer of Batangas asked whether the executive order makes the VIP a PA automatically. Ms. Sangalang replied that it is the NIPAS Act that recognized the EO 578 as a basis for VIP to become an Initial Component under the System. AD Andres added that there are two tracks that can be used to establish: via direct legislation; and 2) through the issuance of a Presidential Proclamation first then legislation.
12. AD Andres appealed to the Body to cooperate in these initial works and look at all development projects being proposed and a law that we can use to protect the VIP. In particular, how do the provinces maximize the provision of the law so that the VIP Management Board can collect funds from the development projects for the protection of VIP, the income generated can be plowed back for the management of the VIP.
13. Ms. Alcanices mentioned her apprehension on the common knowledge that the NIPAS is very strict and it should be noted that VIP is into tourism, and is a very busy sea lane to which AD Andres responded that NIPAS protected areas establish its multiple use zone (MUZ) and strict protection zone (SPZ) or they can serve as the go zone and no go zone.
14. Mr. Romeo Pangilinan of the Marinduque Provincial Agricultural Office (PAGO) fully agreed with the suggestion of Mr. Awitan to include the municipal/city LGUs in the discussions/meetings. In addition, he said that Integrated FARMC can represent the province.
15. AD Andres is amenable to the above suggestion (that of Batangas PENRO Luis Awitan and Marinduque Mr. Pangilinan of Marinduque PAGO). It was then agreed to meet again with the Provincial Legal Officers as well as DENR Legal Officers to tackle the apprehensions and next steps to undertake as an initial component of the NIPAS. She then added that, if there is a way, we can have some options to discuss among them how we can get support from these LGUs in the Protected Area Suitability (PASA) that is currently being undertaken. Moreover, to support future activities on the VIP, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the LGUs shall be developed.
16. Mr. Pangilinan suggested that the VIP Secretariat will form a Technical Working Group (TWG) prior to the composition of Interim PAMB. The said working group shall be represented by the following as reiterated during the Meeting:
 

BMB		1
Regional Offices	-	2
Provincial Government	-	5
PENROs	-	5
CENROs	-	2

At least 25 Members of the Secretariat to be part of the TWG

17. Occidental Mindoro PENRO Ernesto Tanada agreed to form a TWG and request them to submit names of representatives to attend the VIP Meetings.
18. The following are the agreed discussion points for the next TWG Meeting:

- Composition and date of the next Organizational Meeting
  - **For discussion:** To facilitate key requirements, interim PAMB may be convened composed of members of the MPAN Board. Sub-PAMB may be organized to encourage local-level governance.
  - **For discussion:** Development of a PAMP (identify zones for development), ensure safeguards are in place.
  - **Update:** PASA is due this year, and secondary data is to be transposed for the biophysical data.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS/AGREEMENTS:**

19. The following are the recommended next steps:

- Meet with the Provincial Legal Officers prior to the interim PAMB meeting - furnish Provincial Legal Officers with the minutes of the previous meeting
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to be developed to aid the conduct of the orientation PASA within provinces
- TWG creation: 1 representative (ProvG, PENRO, Chair of Prov. MPAN, RO, NGAs, Secretariat) to meet via Zoom prior to the interim PAMB
- To conduct a TWG Meeting on May 23, 2024, and a Legal Officers' Meeting on May 24, 2023
- To convene an Organizational Meeting sometime in June 2023

Prepared by:



**ALITA D. SANGALANG**  
Senior EMS

## ANNEX A. List of Participants

### FOLLOW-UP ONLINE MEETING OF THE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE MARINE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK AND LAW ENFORCEMENT NETWORK (VIP MPAN AND LEN) ON MAY 4, 2023, 3:00 PM

04 May 2023  
Zoom Conference Platform

#### DENR

##### Biodiversity Management Bureau:

1. Armida P. Andres – OIC Assistant Director, BMB
2. John Erick B. Avelino – Section Chief, CMD-ICMP
3. Alita Sangalang – Senior Ecosystems Management Specialist
4. Pablo G. de los Reyes - Senior Ecosystems Management Specialist
5. Kim Cyrus Miranda – PDO

##### Region 4A:

6. Ma. Carolane P. Gonzales– OIC CDD
7. Wyleen Capito - PENRO Batangas
8. Ferwin John D. Panganiban, Ferwin John, D. PENRO Batangas
9. Ma. Jeanella A. Abanilla - PENRO Batangas
10. Estillore, Allan Willard M. - CENRO Lipa City
11. Josefa M. Lozada - CENRO Lipa City
12. Charlene Jovanne Constantino - CENRO Lipa City
13. Ian Christopher M. Rasay - CENRO Lipa City
14. JOENALYN A. MAGNO - CENRO Calaca City
15. EMELOU R. CATIPON, - CENRO Calaca City

##### Region 4B

16. PENRO Ernesto E Tanada,
17. PENRO Imelda Diaz
18. Ma. Cecilia G. Sawit - Chief, CRFMS
19. Fatima Grate – Crfms
20. Aleth C. Bundoc – PENRO Marinduque
21. Malvin R. Rocero - PENRO ROMBLON
22. Arlyn D. Balibag,- PENRO ROMBLON
23. John Japheth F. Fabellon – CRFMS
24. Dapito, Jhoanne Mae E. – CRFMS

<b>LGUs- Provincial Government</b>
<p>Batangas</p> <p>25. Mr Luis Awitan - PGENRO 26. Ms Lorena Axalan – Office of PGENR 27. Atty. Kathrine Paglinawan – Office of Provincial Legal Officer 28. Panganiban, Ferwin John, D. 29. Nilo Barbonio - Community Relations</p> <p>Marinduque</p> <p>30. Rolando M. Larracas – LGU 31. Romeo G. Pangilinan - Office of the Provincial Agriculturist 32. Jarabe, Arlyn S. Jarabe, - PGENRO</p> <p>Occidental Mindoro</p> <p>33. Ms. Marilyn Alcanices – Office of the Provincial Agriculturist 34. Basa, Joseph Anthony T. - Office of the Provincial Agriculturist 35. Edwin D. Sansano - PGENRO</p> <p>Oriental Mindoro</p> <p>36. Ms. Marilyn Alcanices – Office of the Provincial Agriculturist 37. Lily May E. Lim - PGENRO</p> <p>Romblon</p> <p>38. Delfin F. Mores – PGENRO 39. Raynaldo Angel M. De Juan - PGENRO 40. Norwood N. Falculan - PGENRO</p>
<b>Conservation International</b>
<p>41. Augustus Rex Montebon - Program Manager, Coastal, Marine &amp; Fisheries</p>

## ANNEX B. PHOTO DOCUMENTATION

