



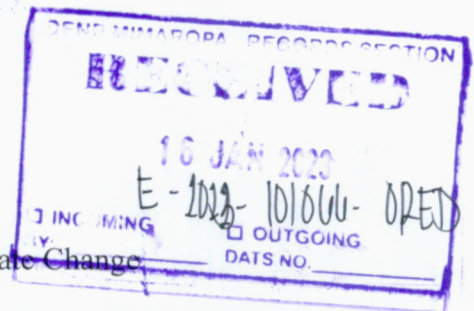
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MEMORANDUM

TO : The Regional Executive Director
DENR-Region IVB MIMAROPA

FROM : The Undersecretary
Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change

SUBJECT : **DESIGNATION OF THE PENRO FELIZARDO CAYATOC OF
PENRO PALAWAN AS PROJECT MANAGER OF THE
PALAWAN WILDLIFE RESCUE AND CONSERVATION
CENTER (PWRCC), IN CONCURRENT CAPACITY**



This refers to the memorandum dated 14 December 2022 of BMB Director Natividad Y. Bernardino, submitting the report of the Team created to conduct evaluation, assessment and verification on the operations and management of the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center.

The Team's overall recommendation is the immediate replacement of the OIC Project Manager of the PWRCC. The findings of the Team indicated that the current management was not able to embody the purpose of the Project lest, it has jeopardized the operations and management of the PWRCC.

In view of said recommendation, **PENRO Felizardo Cayatoc** of PENRO Palawan is hereby designated as **PROJECT MANAGER of PWRCC** effective 02 January 2023 until such time that a new Project Manager has been selected/hired.

As Project Manager, he shall implement the following recommendations:

1. Formulate business plan of PWRCC;
2. Review staffing pattern and hiring of personnel;
3. Set-up financial system to strengthen internal control of the business operation;
4. Improve revenue generation and fund utilization based on approved Work and Financial Plan;
5. Ensure the supply and delivery of animal feeds; and
6. Ensure that all wildlife in the center are fed regularly and sufficiently by following the prescribed feeding schedules, among others.

He is also requested to regularly update the undersigned of the status of the operations of PWRCC for monitoring purposes.

For your information and immediate appropriate action.



ATTY. ANALIZA REBUELTA-TEH



cc: PENRO Felizardo Cayatoc
Province of Palawan

The Officer-In-Charge, NRDC

The Undersecretary for Filed Operations



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Document No: DENRCO - AS RMD-2022-031791-A Print Date: Wednesday, December 28, 2022

Sender: NATIVIDAD Y. BERNARDINO

Address: DENR BMB

Subject: MEMO DTD 12/14/2022 RE: SUBMISSION OF REPORT ON THE EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT AND VERIFICATION ON THE OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PALAWAN WILDLIFE RESCUE AND CONSERVATION CENTER (W/ ONE BROWN ENVELOPE EXCEPT CC)

Addressee(s): Office of the Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change (OUFISCC)

CC Addressee(s): Office of the Undersecretary for Legal, Administration, Human Resources and Legislative Affairs (OULAHRLA), Office of the Undersecretary for Field Operations and Environment (OUFOE)

Date/Time Received: 12/15/2022 02:10:00 PM

ROUTING AND ACTION INFORMATION				
FROM	DATE/TIME RECEIVED	FOR/TO	DATE/TIME RELEASED	ACCEPTANCE REMARKS/ACTION REQUIRED/TAKEN REMARKS/STATUS
	12/15/2022 02:47:03 PM	DENRCO - AS RMD		
DENRCO - AS RMD	12/19/2022 10:42:57 AM	OUFISCC	12/15/2022 02:47:10 PM	USEC TEH Date: 12/23/2022 06:37:15 AM To: From: Espinol, Maria Teresa B. Message: Rose pls finalize and call me-usec teh Date: 12/27/2022 03:09:38 PM To: From: Espinol, Maria Teresa B. Message: Usec teh Date: 12/28/2022 10:21:39 AM To: From: Espinol, Maria Teresa B. Message: USEC TEH FR CHA

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Memorandum to REGIONAL OFFICE

CC: PONTASO CAYATOC

OIC, NRDC

USECPO

Letter to MS. GINA VARELLA - PNRC

W/attachment



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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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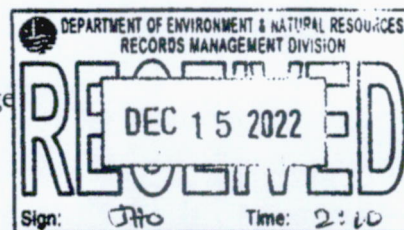
DEC 14 2022

MEMORANDUM

FOR : The Undersecretary
Finance, Information System and Climate Change

FROM : The OIC Director

SUBJECT : **SUBMISSION OF REPORT ON THE EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT
AND VERIFICATION ON THE OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT
OF THE PALAWAN WILDLIFE RESCUE AND CONSERVATION
CENTER**

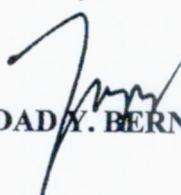


This refers to your Memorandum dated 06 September 2022 instructing this Bureau to create a Team composed of representatives from NRDC and PENRO Palawan to evaluate and assess the management and operation of the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center (PWRCC) with regard to the reported observations of the BMB team and the explanations of the OIC PWRCC Project Director.

Pursuant to the BMB issued Special Order No. 2022-226 dated 11 October 2022, the Team conducted the assessment, evaluation, and verification on PWRCC's operation and management last October 11-14, 2022. The members were divided into three groups to handle the following aspects: (1) Management, (2) Financial, and (3) Technical.

Foregoing considered, submitted herewith is the Report of the Team (Annex "A") containing the evaluation, assessment, and recommendations on the matter.

For information, consideration, and/or further instruction(s), if any.


NATIVIDAD Y. BERNARDINO

cc: The Undersecretary for Legal, Administration,
Human Resources and Legislative Affairs

The Undersecretary for Field Operations
Luzon, Visayas and Environment



**REPORT ON THE EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT AND VERIFICATION
OF THE OBSERVED IRREGULARITIES ON THE OPERATION AND
MANAGEMENT OF THE PALAWAN WILDLIFE RESCUE AND
CONSERVATION CENTER (PWRCC)**

October 11-14, 2022

Team Leader: Atty. Theresa M. Tenazas, BMB
Members: Ms. Mirasol E. Ocampo, BMB
Ms. Izel Ibardolaza, BMB
Ms. Jessica Esmael, BMB
Mr. Bernard Peña, BMB
Atty. Jazmin Altea, DENR MIMAROPA
Ms. Rhodora Ubani, PENRO Palawan
Mr. Renato Cornel, PENRO Palawan
Ms. Belinda Abrea, PENRO Palawan
Mr. Alexander Linde, NRDC
Ms. Nora Bernardo, NRDC

Technical Secretariat: Ms. Cecille G. Francisco, BMB
Ms. Katrina Erika Manalo, BMB
Ms. Kimberly Anne E. Francisco, BMB

BACKGROUND:

PWRCC Management and Operations

The Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center (PWRCC), formerly known as the Crocodile Farm Institute (CFI) is a national government project established in 1987 by the DENR through the technical and financial support from the Government of Japan.

The project aimed to:

- a) conserve the two threatened species of crocodiles in the Philippines namely, the Saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) and Freshwater crocodile or Philippine crocodile (*Crocodylus mindorensis*);
- b) promote the socio-economic well-being of local communities through the development and introduction of a sustainable crocodile farming technology; and,
- c) serve as a rescue and rehabilitation center for confiscated, donated and/or abandoned wild fauna in Palawan, it being the only existing wildlife facility in the Province.

The Technical Cooperation Agreement between the two countries ended on 19 August 1994. Since then, the CFI has become solely a project of the Philippine Government through the DENR - Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (now Biodiversity Management Bureau). As a crocodile breeding farm in the Philippines registered with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), the PWRCC is duly authorized to use the captive-bred *C. porosus* specimens for commercial purposes.

However, the DENR-BMB has no mandate to directly engage into any commercial undertaking, hence, the management issued DENR Administrative Order (DAO) No. 2002-11 on 05 March 2002 (Annex A), transferring the direct supervision and management of the PWRCC from DENR-PAWB (now BMB) to the Natural Resources Development Corporation (NRDC).

Such transfer aimed to facilitate the development of the Center into a self-sustaining facility through commercial ventures, including promotion of the crocodile (*C. porosus*) leather industry.

Nevertheless, the DENR issued DAO 2010-27 on October 26, 2010 (Annex B), transferring the supervision and management of PWRCC from NRDC back to PAWB (now BMB). The reasons cited for the transfer were pursuant to the results of the investigation conducted. These are the following, to wit:

- a) NRDC failure to comply with the provisions of DAO 2002-11, DAO 99-45 (Sale and Farming of Crocodiles), and other policies, including the provisions of Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Protection and Conservation Act; and,
- b) NRDC failure to meet the objectives of PWRCC especially in terms of developing the PWRCC into a self-sustaining operation in its eight (8) years of business undertaking at the PWRCC.

On September 17, 2020, DENR issued again DAO 2020-10 (Annex C), transferring the operations and management of the PWRCC from BMB to NRDC for the latter to pursue the commercial aspect of the Center.

Interventions

The Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) received a verbal instruction last March 2022 from then DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna to facilitate the transfer of the management and operation of PWRCC from NRDC to BMB and DENR Region IVB-MIMAROPA through PENRO Palawan. Hence, the Bureau conducted the following activities in relation to the abovesaid directive, to wit: a) drafted the DAO "Defining the Management Arrangements for the Operation of the PWRCC"; and, b) conducted an assessment of the management and operations of the PWRCC last March 22-24, 2022 in coordination with DENR MIMAROPA Region and PENRO Palawan.

The Bureau set a meeting with NRDC last 29 June 2022 to discuss the draft DAO and present the observations and findings of the Team concerning the operations and management of the PWRCC. Likewise, a Memorandum was also submitted to the NRDC last 29 July 2022 containing the findings and recommendations of the Bureau regarding the said PWRCC assessment. The NRDC, upon receipt of the said Memorandum, issued communication for the PWRCC OIC Project Director, Ms. Gina Varilla, last 03 August 2022 to provide an explanation in writing with regard to the findings of the BMB. Ms. Varilla promptly submitted a Memorandum to NRDC last 04 August 2022 bearing her explanations.

These reports were referred to Usec. Analiza Rebuelta-Teh, the Undersecretary for Finance, Information, Systems and Climate Change, as the supervising Undersecretary of NRDC. Consequently, Usec. Teh issued an instruction for BMB to create a Team through a Memorandum dated 06 September 2022. The main objective of this Team is to evaluate and assess the PWRCC management and operation with regard to the reported observations of the BMB team and the explanations of the OIC PWRCC Project Director.

Relative thereto, the BMB issued Special Order No. 2022-226 dated 11 October 2022 (Annex D), creating a Team to undertake the following activities a) assess and evaluate the operations and management of PWRCC based on the monitoring report of BMB and clarification made by the PWRCC Project Manager; and, b) coordinate and seek representation and assistance from DENR MIMAROPA Region, PENRO Palawan and Natural Resources Development Corporation (NRDC).

HIGHLIGHTS AND RESULTS:

Upon arrival on 11 October 2022, the representatives from BMB and NRDC conducted a preparatory meeting with the Team members from the DENR-MIMAROPA and PENRO Palawan. Atty. Theresa M. Tenazas, OIC of the Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) of BMB, as the Team leader, presented a brief background of the activity, its objectives and timelines, among others. Proposed strategies to be implemented during the activity for the validation and assessment of the previous monitoring report of the BMB vis-a-vis the clarifications made by the PWRCC Project Manager were also tackled. During the said meeting, the team decided to divide the members into three groups, each of which will be handling the following aspects: (1) Management, (2) Financial, and (3) Technical. The conduct of interviews and collation of secondary data (PWRCC records) were the main activities identified.

The following day (12 October 2022), the Team conducted a courtesy meeting with the PWRCC OIC Project Manager, Ms. Gina Varilla, to discuss the purpose of the Team's visit to the Center. Thereafter, the Team proceeded with the assessment and evaluation of the PWRCC operation and management. Specifically, verification of the BMB findings vis-a-vis the PWRCC response was done. Each group interviewed a number of PWRCC personnel whom they identified that can provide information with regard to the operation of the Center. For the Technical group, personnel from the Technical Section were interviewed *i.e.*, animal keepers, Head of Section. The Financial group on the other hand interviewed personnel involved in the procurement, ticketing, canvassing, and other finance-related activities of the Center. For the management group, a random sample of personnel were identified (animal keepers, utility, tourist receptionists, park attendants, etc.) together with some key personnel (human resources, administrative assistant/s). Additionally, relevant documents and records from the PWRCC were also requested. These will be used as the main bases in verifying the transactions undertaken by the Center. The conduct of personnel interview and gathering of secondary data went on for three-days (12-14 October 2022).

In order to likewise reflect the remarks of the PWRCC management in the validation, Ms. Varilla was also interviewed, specifically tackling the findings of the BMB and additional issues noted by the Team. Her responses were noted together with the collated primary and secondary information. At the end of each day, a debriefing was done at the Office of the Project Manager where the Team relayed the activities done all throughout the day within the Center as well as the next steps for the days to follow. Acknowledging the confidentiality of information shared by the personnel during interviews, findings of the team were not disclosed to the Project Manager.

During the last day, a few members of the Team conducted a brief ocular inspection of the facilities and the wildlife housed at the Center. Photographs of infrastructures and animals were taken during this part of the activity. Attached as Annex E herein is the photo documentation of the Team.

Upon finishing the assessment, a brief exit conference was conducted at PENRO Palawan to report the Team's preliminary findings. Each Team presented their major findings to the PENRO Officer, For. Felizardo B. Cayatoc, for his information and reference. Several issues such as the procurement of wildlife food/feeds, submission of food purchase documents and requirements were elaborated and discussed, specifically on the status of payment of the contracted suppliers for the PWRCC. For this, representatives from the Budget Unit, Accounting Unit, and BAC Secretariat were enjoined to attend the said meeting.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

A1. Irregular and Insufficient Purchase and Delivery of Wildlife Feeds

BMB Findings	PWRCC OIC-Manager Response
<p>The crocodiles and other wildlife at the PWRCC are receiving irregular feeding and insufficient food</p> <p>The animal food supplier (BR & Biboy Variety Store) contracted by the Center in 2021 failed to deliver the animal food/feeds on time, delivering the supplies in batches instead of in bulk per week.</p>	<p>BR & Biboy Variety Store does not have a Platinum PhilGeps registration, which is a major eligibility requirement to participate in public bidding. As per the BAC-Secretariat of the PENRO Palawan, registration is a must especially that the approved budgetary costs of crocodile and wildlife feeds in the PRs are >Php 50,000.00.</p>

Findings:

BR & Biboy Variety Store failed to deliver the animal food/feeds on time resulting to the irregular feeding of crocodiles and other wildlife at the Center in 2021. Quantity of food/feeds delivered were also insufficient as compared to what was indicated in the purchase request.

As per the information gathered, BR & Biboy Variety Store was contracted through quotation, winning as the lowest bidder against two (2) other potential suppliers. It was supposed to supply the prescribed quantity of animal food/feeds for the Center from August to December 2021. As agreed by the PWRCC and the supplier, the delivery is to be made weekly. The Team verified that the schedule of the delivery was indeed not done weekly and that the quantity of the food purchased and delivered was evidently insufficient, both for the crocodiles and other wildlife in the Center.

From August 2021 to February 2022, only 3,817 kg of crocodile feeds were procured from the said supplier (Table 1), consisting of condemned chicken and fresh fish “balo” (Annex F1). This is in stark difference as compared to the identified/prescribed quantity of food/feeds for crocodiles which is at least 3,143.14 kg of feed per month, roughly 22,001 kg for seven (7) months (August 2021 to February 2022). According to the PWRCC-Canvasser, the supplier was not able to deliver the agreed quantity of food/feed supply until December 2021, and there were instances where deliveries were not made. Thus, the delivery of the remaining supply was extended until February 2022.

Moreover, since the Project Manager cited that the donations of condemned meat were sufficient to cater the needs of the carnivores (*i.e.* crocodiles, raptor species, pythons) and omnivores (*i.e.* Palawan forest turtle, palm civet, bearcat) in the Center, the budget intended for the weekly purchase of such was reallocated instead to purchase fish “balo” for the crocodile hatchlings. There were no grounds cited nor formal communication submitted as basis for the reallocation of the said budget intended for the purchase of meat. Nonetheless, it was verified through records that the quantity of fish purchased was also insufficient.

A minimum of 942.94 kg of fish is needed per month to support polytype feeding of crocodiles whereas based on the deliveries made by the supplier, a total of 2,550 kg was only delivered in five (5) months, equating to a monthly average of 510 kg. Also, fish purchased was only “balo”, a type of white meat specifically meant to be fed to hatchlings. This means that there were essentially no fish fed to larger crocodiles as only fish balo was purchased from the supplier, which is barely enough for the hatchlings.

Table 1. BR & Biboy Variety Store Crocodile Feeds Deliveries				
Month	Date of deliveries	Quantity (kg)	Total Quantity (kg)	Type of Feeds
August 2021	August 7	490	1,267	condemned chicken
	August 14	460		
	August 21	317		
September 2021	September 15	200	544	Fish balo
	September 17	344		
October 2021	No Delivery			
November 2021	November 24	259	805	Fish balo
	November 25	546		
December 2021	December 13	587	587	Fish balo
January 2022	January 27	124	124	Fish
February 2022	February 18	490	490	Fish
Total Deliveries			3,817	

For the other wildlife species maintained in the Center, supplies were likewise found to be insufficient as it was reported by the Canvasser that the supplier decides how much of the products will be delivered depending on the availability of products procured. It was however ensured that the overall quantity agreed per the contract was fully delivered by the supplier (hence the extension of the supplier’s delivery period). Additionally, all interviewed animal keepers assigned to care for other wildlife species stated that the animals are also not eating regularly and sufficiently. As they have pointed out, wildlife feeds have less nutritional value as the animals are just being fed with bananas most of the time. They further noted that they are oftentimes left with no choice but to look for fruit-bearing trees and vegetables within the Center just so they can feed the wildlife.

Recommendations:

The PWRCC management is enjoined to be proactive in terms of procuring wildlife feeds. Since there are available food requirement table as bases for the weekly consumption of crocodiles and other wildlife, the management should anticipate the depletion of feeds and supplies and promptly process its procurement. Aside from this, the delivery should also be closely monitored, making sure that the supplier delivers regularly. Quantities of feeds delivered must be cross checked in comparison to the weekly requirement. It is highly discouraged to allow suppliers to deliver in bulk because this would incur irregularities in the feeding of wildlife. Whenever supplies are unavailable or delivery is compromised, the management is obliged to procure from other sources, following the proper processing of purchases. When feasible, the planting of easy to grow fruit trees and vegetables within idle land areas of the Center is encouraged to provide an additional source of feed for wildlife.

A2. Irregular and Insufficient Feeding

BMB Findings	PWRCC OIC-Manager Response
<p>The crocodiles and other wildlife at the PWRCC are receiving irregular feeding and insufficient food</p> <p>The wildlife species in the Center were reported to have been eating irregularly since October 2021 due to the irregular and insufficient delivery of animal foods/feeds.</p>	<p>The total donation by various donors from September to December 2021 was 7.688 tons of condemned meat. That would equal to an average of 1.9 tons of feeds/month for 1,433 crocodiles. Bananas, which served as the main food for wildlife, were scarce due to typhoon Odette. As advised by the resident</p>

	<p>veterinarian, dog food and concentrated seed mix were purchased as alternative sources of nutrients.</p> <p>For the 3rd quarter of 2021, a total of 7.939 tons of fresh fish and condemned meat were received by PWRCC from the supplier and various donors. That would equate to a monthly average of 2.646 tons of feeds.</p> <p>From January to July 2022, a total of 16.346 tons of fresh fish and condemned meat was received. A deep pit was even excavated to bury the excess condemned meat received in April.</p>
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Findings:

The crocodiles and other wildlife species in the Center are not eating regularly due to the irregular and insufficient delivery of animal foods/feeds. Wildlife and crocodile feeds procured are significantly lesser than the food requirement.

Based on the 2020 computation for 1267 individuals of crocodile made by the Technical Services Division of the PWRCC, the estimated amount and food consumption for crocodile species in a poly type feeding (70% meat, 30% fish) is at least 3,143.14 kg of feeds per month, specifically 2,200.19 kg of meat and 942.94 kg of fish. To provide context to this, this numerical value is reiterated to be modest and is the actual minimum, inferring that 3,143.14 kg is barely sufficient to feed wildlife optimally. Anchoring on this and looking at Table 2 below, the findings of the BMB are easily proven to be accurate -- the crocodiles in the Center are not eating sufficiently. In fact, stating that the crocodiles are being starved (based on the necropsy report and accomplishment report of the Veterinarian at the Center) is much befitting to describe the current situation. As of September 2022, there are 1,321 crocodile heads being maintained in the Center, hence, the food consumption is expected to be more than the above-said quantity.

Ms. Varilla mentioned that in the 3rd quarter of 2021, a total of 7,939 kg (=7.939 tons) of condemned meat and fresh fish was received by the PWRCC from the supplier and various donors, equating to a monthly average of 2,646 kg. This did not supplement the 3,143.14 kg minimum monthly feed requirement for crocodiles. As shown in Table 2, 18 % (1,392 kg) of the said received quantity was from the purchases made, while the remaining 82% (6,547 kg) were from donations. Moreover, it was revealed that the PWRCC is accepting all the foods/feeds being donated, regardless of its condition (whether or not suitable for wildlife consumption) and quantity. The donations were weighed as they were upon arrival to the Center. This means that the quantity recorded as donations simply pertains to the “raw” amount of the donations. Since these donations were condemned meat, the keepers would then have to manually check which were still viable and which were not anymore suitable for crocodile consumption. Therefore, the 6,547 kg of condemned meat was an overestimation and not the actual quantity fed to the crocodiles. There were no parameters presented by the management to identify how much of those donations were actually fed to the crocodiles.

For 2022, there was indeed a total of 16,346 kg of fresh fish and condemned meat received from January to July, of which 90% (14,778 kg) were from donations and the remaining 10% (1,569 kg) were purchased. This gave a monthly average of 2,335.25 kg which was still insufficient to fill the monthly food requirement. Further, looking at the quantity of donations/purchases received per month (Table 2), a grave inconsistency can be observed. Feeds received per month were greatly insufficient (except for the month of April 2022) and did not reach the minimum required quantity per month. This implies that per month, only a number of crocodile heads, mostly hatchlings and juveniles, were actually fed. With the quantity of feed as low as 697 kg (February 2022) a month, it is even assumed that not all hatchlings were rationed with food. As for the amount of crocodile feed received in April 2022, 6,865.76 kg was evidently too much and knowing the

capacity of the serviceable freezers in the Center, there really was a need to eventually bury excess condemned meat. Assuming that all carnivores were fed during the said month, the fact that they have been fed less (or none at all) for the past months cannot be simply overlooked. This kind of feeding scheme is highly unsustainable and goes against the principles of wildlife care. Although crocodile species are generally known to have the ability to adjust to limited food resources, they still have their threshold/ maximum tolerance that will implicate negative effects, especially in captive populations, once reached.

Table 2. Summary of crocodile feeds received per month from August 2021 to September 2022

Month	Quantity of Purchase (kg)	Type of Feeds	Quantity of Donation (kg)	Type of Feeds	Total Quantity (kg)
August 2021	1,433	condemned chicken meat	no donation		1,433
September 2021	667	condemned pork meat and fresh fish balo	952	assorted condemned meat (chicken, goat, pork)	1,619
October 2021	no delivery from supplier		2,509	assorted condemned meat (carabao, chicken, pork)	2,509
November 2021	805	Fish balo	1,831	assorted condemned meat (carabao, chicken, pork)	2,636
December 2021	587	Fish balo	2,207	condemned chicken and pork	2,794
January 2022	124	Fish	1,116	assorted condemned meat (cow, carabao, chicken, pork)	1,240
February 2022	490	Fish	207	condemned chicken	697
March 2022	no delivery from supplier		598.10	assorted condemned meat (carabao, chicken, pork)	598.10
April 2022	335	Fish	6,530.76	condemned chicken and pork	6,865.76
May 2022	no delivery from supplier		1,047.30	condemned chicken and fish	1,047.30
June 2022	300	Fish	4,569	assorted condemned meat (carabao, chicken, pork) and rejected hotdogs	4,869
July 2022	320	Fish tulingan	709.60	assorted condemned meat (carabao, chicken, pork)	1,029.60
August 2022	306	Fish tulingan	485	assorted condemned meat (carabao, chicken, pork)	791
September 2022	no delivery from supplier		1,438	assorted condemned meat (carabao, chicken, pork)	1,438.00
TOTAL					29,567

To verify the actual feeding condition of the wildlife in the Center, animal keepers were interviewed to primarily ask the conditions of the wildlife in their assigned areas. Last feeding schedules, frequency of feeding, mortalities and its observed causes were some of the questions asked, among others. Most of them revealed that the feeding schedule for both crocodiles and other wildlife heavily depended on the frequency of donations and arrival of deliveries. They reiterated

that although they want to feed the wildlife under their care based on the recommended feeding frequency, they essentially cannot do so if there are no wildlife feeds available. Aside from that, they are often left with the burden of portioning the feed and/or giving it to whichever wildlife needs it since it is insufficient. Indicated in Table 3 below is the summary of crocodile feeding frequencies noted by the Team.

Table 3. Recommended vs Actual feeding frequency of crocodiles by size classification					
Crocodile Class	Recommended Feeding Frequency (per week)	Recommended Feeding Frequency (per month)	Actual Feeding Frequency (per week)	Actual Feeding Frequency (per month)	Remarks
Hatchling	3 to 4 times	12 to 16 times	once every 2 weeks	2 times	heavily depends on the frequency of donation; hatchlings <1 year old are prioritized
Juvenile	2 to 3 times	8 to 12 times	once	4 times	heavily depends on the frequency of donation; stocks for primefresh are prioritized
Sub-adult	2 to 3 times	8 to 12 times	once	4 times	heavily depends on the frequency of donation; food is oftentimes scavenged on whatever is left after feeding hatchlings and juveniles
Breeder	1 to 2 times	4 to 8 times	-	once	heavily depends on the frequency of donation; food is heavily scavenged on whatever is left after feeding hatchlings, juveniles, and sub-adults

Recommendations:

The PWRCC management must ensure that all wildlife maintained in the center are fed regularly and sufficiently by following the prescribed feeding schedules. A feeding schedule matrix for all wildlife species must be adopted, updated or created wherein keepers are required to record/note wildlife feeding frequencies per day. This will address the confusion as to when the wildlife last ate. Additionally, there should be an inventory of all supplies fed to the wildlife. For instance, if crocodiles in Hatchling House A require 500 kg of fish balo per week, the animal keeper must note how many kg of fish balo was fed to them every time he/she feeds them, to ensure that they receive the minimum quantity of 500 kg. Further, the 3,143.14 kg crocodile feed requirement must be reached per month. The Team emphasizes that this value is fixed and non-negotiable. There should be atleast 3,143.14 kg crocodile feed per month fed to the crocodiles. The PWRCC management must procure the needed quantity per week to avoid the irregular feeding of wildlife, regardless of the frequency of generous donations from other individuals and facilities.

The management is reminded that even if the PWRCC is a Project of the Philippine government, it is still subject to the laws protecting the welfare of the wildlife in the country. The irregular and insufficient feeding of wildlife in the Center which results in wildlife mortality is encompassed in Section 27 (Illegal Acts) of Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act. Specifically, the practice falls under items (a) and (h) of the said law which states that it is unlawful to: (a) kill and destroy wildlife; and (h) maltreat and inflict injuries to wildlife. Further, since most Palawan wildlife species are threatened, not to mention

that the two species of crocodiles in the Center are critically endangered, it should be reiterated that penalties for such offenses will be of the highest degree under the existing Philippine laws.

A3. Dependency on Donations and Solicitations

BMB Findings	PWRCC OIC-Manager Response
<p>The crocodiles and other wildlife at the PWRCC are receiving irregular feeding and insufficient food</p> <p>The PWRCC heavily <i>relied/depended on donations and solicitations</i> (being done by the PWRCC staff) of condemned meat such as carabaos and pigs from various sources (city vet, slaughterhouses, farmers, markets, etc.) to feed the crocodiles and other wildlife.</p>	<p>PWRCC has never relied on donations. The carcasses of animals and condemned meat donated by the City Veterinarian's Office, City Slaughterhouse and other storage houses are just additional feed allocations, which are proven to be very helpful since the 1 million Php fund provided by BMB may not be sufficient for a year's supply of feeds.</p>

Findings:

The PWRCC management indeed heavily relied/depended on donations and solicitations of condemned meat from various sources to feed the wildlife maintained in the Center, especially crocodiles. Also, most of the PWRCC staff are soliciting for wildlife feeds in the market and slaughterhouses.

Donations of condemned meat and other excess supplies of fruits and vegetables were found to be very helpful in serving as additional feeds for the wildlife in PWRCC. However, it was found by the Team that donations have become the main source of wildlife feeds in the Center. From August to December 2021 (Annex F1), the Center received a total of 10,991 kg of condemned meat, wherein 68.23% (7,499 kg) were from donations. From January to September 2022, a total of 18,576 kg condemned meat was received where 89.91% (16,701 kg) were again from donations. Consequently, it is worthy to note that the PWRCC management did not purchase any condemned/fresh meat (aside from fish) for crocodile feeds since January 2022. For this reason, the monthly feed requirement of crocodiles was never reached, resulting in insufficient feedings.

Additionally, interviewed personnel identified donations as the main parameter to determine the feeding frequency of wildlife, citing the arrival of donations as an indicator for when wildlife can eat. They likewise expressed their dismay in letting them solicit for wildlife feeds in the market and slaughterhouses. These included doing work outside of the PWRCC to convince stall owners to donate their vegetable scraps or "trash", as they call it, just so the wildlife can eat. Aside from that, they explained that condemned meat donations were tricky because it arrives in the Center "uncleaned", meaning that they would have to manually check which ones can be fed to the wildlife, and which cannot (those with moldy, slimy, decomposing meat parts). When asked for recommendations to improve the operations of the PWRCC, all of the interviewed personnel specifically stated that they would prefer and look forward to regular deliveries from suppliers rather than wait or solicit for donations.

Recommendations:

The PWRCC has an allotted budget for the purchase of wildlife feeds indicated in its Work and Financial Plan, hence, the procurement of such must be fixed and consistent. Regardless of the presence of donations, wildlife feeds must be procured to ensure that there is enough food for the wildlife every week. When instances arise where donations of condemned meat are bounteous, the management is recommended to allot the said budget for the purchase of other necessary feeds

(e.g. fish baló, fruits and vegetables, etc.), subject to the approval and clearance from the relevant agencies (NRDC, BMB). Moreover, as much as the true effort and compassion of PWRCC personnel are highly appreciated, it is discouraged to allow the aforesaid to solicit for wildlife feeds, even if the intention was to help the Center. This can degrade the morale of these personnel, especially given the fact that this could have been easily avoided if not for the inefficiency of the PWRCC management.

For donations arriving at the Center, it is as much as possible encouraged to refuse donations which are not anymore fit for wildlife consumption. The management is aware of the capacity of the Center's storage facilities, hence, is recommended to receive them in moderation to avoid additional work in disposing spoiled food. The quantity of donations suitable for wildlife consumption (after it has been sorted) must also be recorded as the actual quantity of donation received.

A4. High crocodile and other wildlife mortality

BMB Findings	PWRCC OIC-Manager Response
<p>High crocodile and wildlife mortality</p> <p>From October 2021 to March 2022, crocodile mortality in the Center was recorded to have a total of 91 individual crocodiles, comprising 57 hatchlings, 15 juveniles, 7 sub-adults, and 12 breeders. From January to May 2022, crocodile mortality in the Center was recorded to have a total of 109 individuals. The month of March alone recorded 39 mortalities mostly of hatchlings. Most of these hatchlings were in poor body condition, runts, emaciated and were reported to have died due to starvation and a generally weakened immune system based on the necropsy reports of the Veterinarian at the Center. This was directly attributed by the Veterinarian to the deficiency and failure to provide the species' food requirement – ultimately failing to care for and sustain the life of the wildlife.</p>	<p>Mortalities have significantly lessened in CY 2021 when the undersigned took over. Based on records, in CY 2019, deaths tallied a record-high of 249 mortalities. The high number of deaths of crocodiles was one of the questions asked from the Animal Keepers, one of the reasons given was that crocodiles are territorial and in every pen, there is a dominant one who always instigates fights with other crocodiles. For the mortalities this year, hatchlings had the most number at 88, juvenile 37, sub-adult 12, and breeder 10. According to the veterinarian, the high rate of crocodile mortality in hatchlings is due to a weak immune system at birth.</p>

Findings:

Crocodile and wildlife mortality is high. As of September 2022, 167 crocodile mortality (Annex F2) was recorded while 45 mortalities were recorded for other wildlife maintained in the Center from January to July 2022 as per the necropsy reports submitted by the Veterinarian.

Table 4 below shows the summary of crocodile mortalities from 2017 to 2022 (January to September) with estimated monthly average of mortalities. As can be gleaned upon, the highest recorded mortality was indeed in 2019 with 249 crocodile heads (averaging 21 per month). This record was noted to be due to the spread of a water-borne disease among crocodiles during the said year. On the contrary, from the 1st to the 3rd quarter of 2022, mortality of 167 crocodile heads was recorded, averaging to 19 per month. This is the second highest average per month recorded for the last six (6) years. Although it is less than what was tallied in 2019, it must be noted that this average mortality value only accounts for the past nine (9) months of the year. This means that this value could still increase/decrease depending on the mortality record for October to December of this year. Hence, it is incorrect and too early to say that mortalities have significantly lessened. Additionally, it can be noticed that of the 167 crocodiles, 59% (98 heads) are *C. mindorensis* while 41% (69 heads) are *C. porosus*, inferring that both species of crocodiles suffer from population loss at the Center. Expressed in Table 5 is the breakdown of crocodile mortality per quarter. As of September, there are 1,321 crocodile heads left being maintained in the Center.

Table 4. Summary of crocodile mortality from 2017- 3 rd Quarter of 2022						
Year	<i>C. mindorensis</i>	<i>C. porosus</i>	Total	<i>C. mindorensis</i> percentage	<i>C. porosus</i> percentage	Estimated Average Mortality per month
2017	142	26	168	85%	15%	14
2018	116	12	128	91%	9%	11
2019	234	15	249	94%	6%	21
2020	93	83	176	53%	47%	15
2021	66	31	97	68%	32%	8
2022 (January to September)	98	69	167	59%	41%	19

Table 5. 2022 crocodile mortality record per quarter			
Crocodile Species	1st Quarter (Jan-Mar) Mortalities	2nd Quarter (Apr-June) Mortalities	3rd Quarter (Jul-Sept) Mortalities
<i>C. mindorensis</i>	29	46	23
<i>C. porosus</i>	36	17	16
Total	65	63	39

In the case of other wildlife species, attached as Annex F3 and F4 are the summary of necropsy reports for January to July 2022 submitted to the PWRCC Project Manager and the actual necropsy forms accomplished by the Veterinarian, respectively. Based on these documents, 45 heads of other wildlife species maintained in the Center died with varying causes of mortality such as infection, stress, dehydration, malnutrition, and starvation, among others. Several tentative diagnoses appeared alarming to the Team as it pointed out starvation as the main cause of death of the wildlife. The remarks made by the Veterinarian indicating that the wildlife had “severely atrophied pectoral muscles” were seen by the Team to be related to starvation or the death caused by hunger. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that other possible reasons for such findings can be cited (*i.e.* restricted movement of species, underlying wildlife illness).

Generally, other wildlife species appeared to be visibly emaciated, sickly and weak. This circumstance is considered by the Team to be a direct result of insufficient and irregular feeding, ultimately leading to the death of wildlife species, let alone the endemic and threatened ones.

During the interview, animal keepers were asked to cite at least three possible reasons that they have observed for crocodile mortalities. The Team stated that as animal keepers who spend most of their time in the Center taking care of the wildlife, they must have some noteworthy observations. Most of them stated that the larger crocodiles (breeders, sub-adult, juveniles) often fight and inflict injuries to other crocodiles especially if they are put together in the same pens. On the other hand, several keepers noted that crocodile hatchlings and juveniles are already emaciated and have poor body condition, leading to a generally weakened immune system. Attached as Annex F5 is the raw crocodile mortality record kept by the animal keepers in Hatchling House A. They attributed this to the irregular and insufficient feeding of the wildlife. The same was said for other wildlife species remarked to be very much evident in bearcats and snakes. Another reason identified by the animal keepers was indigestion. This is also reflected in the necropsy reports of the Veterinarian. When asked to elaborate on this matter, animal keepers said that when the wildlife has been fed irregularly and is famished, it will adjust its body to the lack of food supply. However, when it is suddenly fed too much, that is when donations are abundant, its body cannot cope due to the amount of food ingested and the wildlife thus suffers from internal organ inflammation and further indigestion.

A5. Wildlife Food Requirement

BMB Findings	PWRCC OIC-Manager Response
Recommendations A weekly food requirement table (identified by the head of the crocodile and wildlife sections) should be used as a basis for procuring the amount of food products. Further, it must be ensured that the quantity of food delivered per week in the Center is within the optimal amount needed by the wildlife. This is to avoid wildlife casualties resulting from malnourishment. Upon delivery, all procured products should undergo the process of procurement, i.e., inspection, acceptance, proper recording.	 A weekly food requirement by the Wildlife Rescue Unit in-charge is the basis of food allocation of wildlife animals. Crocodiles and other wildlife animals are fed based on the food requirement recommended by the then Chief of Technical Section to the Project Director weekly requirement and are always monitored. This weekly requirement is monitored by the Official Canvasser as guide on the quantity of items to be ordered from the supplier on a weekly basis, in coordination with PENRO BAC-Secretariat who takes responsibility in abiding by the provisions of the procurement process.

Findings:

The weekly food requirement matrix made for crocodiles and other wildlife is not being followed.

Mr. Salvador Guion, Chief of the Technical Section of the PWRCC, submitted a memorandum dated 16 October 2018 to the then Project Director Ronie B. Gandeza, indicating the feeds and feeding husbandry management of crocodiles at the PWRCC (Annex F6). This document served as the basis for the computation of the feeding requirement of crocodiles based on each size classification. Thereafter, matrices for the estimated amount and food consumption for monotype and polytype feeding of crocodiles were computed (2020). Similarly, the same was done for other wildlife species, generating a feed consumption table. These matrices were supposed to be the basis in the procurement of feeds for crocodiles and other wildlife specifically in terms of quantity of products needed per week. Attached as Annex F7 and Annex F8 are the aforementioned matrices, respectively.

Upon verification of the Team, it was found that these matrices were indeed used as guides in the procurement requests of the PWRCC, mainly in identifying the quantity of products to be delivered by the supplier (as agreed). However, the opposite was observed when it came to the actual purchase and delivery of wildlife feeds. The Canvasser mentioned that the Center converted a portion of the budget for the purchase of condemned/fresh meat to purchase of fish, considering that most donations are condemned meat. Further, the Canvasser revealed that the agreed quantities were oftentimes not fulfilled due to the irregular deliveries. Supplies that needed to be delivered in a week were mostly delivered late, and the then supplier (BR & Biboy Variety Store) decides on the quantity of fish that had to be delivered. Given these, the quantities indicated in the matrices were essentially not followed. Further information on this matter is discussed under the Financial Aspects.

Recommendations:

It is highly recommended that the PWRCC follow the weekly food requirement matrix made for crocodiles and other wildlife. This must be the primary basis in determining the quantity of wildlife feeds to be procured. The Official Canvasser of the PWRCC must work together with the inspector from the PENRO to ensure that the actual quantity of deliveries match with the quantity procured. To this end, it is also recommended to be consistent and stick to the weekly feed requirement when procuring wildlife feeds. The quantity needed by the wildlife per week must be non-negotiable and must be procured as it is. Whenever compromised, alternative sources of nutrients can be used, given that they are procured and are sufficiently available.

A6. Additional Findings/Observations:

➤ ***The crocodiles in the PWRCC are resorting to and/or showing signs of cannibalism.***

The Head of the Technical Section submitted a memorandum dated 10 October 2022 to the Project Manager, reporting observed cannibalism behavior in crocodiles (Annex F9). Based on the document, one *C. mindorensis* species was seen carrying the detached head of a penmate. This was identified by the Team to be directly related to the insufficient and irregular feeding of crocodiles in the Center. Although breeders have the tendency to fight with their pen-mates to show dominance and territoriality, the Team is convinced that these food-deprived breeders are starting to practice cannibalism in order to supplement their need for food. Research and studies explain that crocodiles, though very occasionally, actually opt to cannibalism and eat each other when there is an absence of prey (food in this case since they are captives) or food competition, doing what is necessary to survive.

Furthermore, it can be recalled that one of the causes of hatchling mortality was the presence of skin abrasions and traumatic wounds (*i.e.*, removal of limbs and head) due to fighting. This circumstance was tagged by animal keepers and the Head of the Technical Section as an erratic behavior as they stressed that aggression and species in-fighting are indeed quite common in crocodiles but are very much unlikely and uncommon during the hatchling stage. One reason cited for this behavior is the insufficient and irregular feeding. Limited supply of food pushed these hatchlings to resort to their own means to find food, which in this case is cannibalism.

Recommendations:

To mitigate this issue and discourage the crocodiles from eating one another, it is highly advised to adhere to the regular crocodile feeding schedule, making sure that they receive the optimum food requirement. For instances where signs of cannibalism are observed, animal keepers are enjoined to immediately report them to the Head of the Technical Section where the latter is required to verify them and further report the same in writing to the Project Manager, for information and guidance. A crocodile population count may be done in the pen where crocodile cannibalism was observed to check if the stocks recorded still match the actual number of live crocodiles.

➤ ***There is a high infertility rate in crocodiles.***

The Team observed that there is a high crocodile infertility rate for 2022. From 2018-2021, the PWRCC recorded an average hatching rate ranging from 17% to 21%. It is acknowledged that there are several factors that may have affected the infertility rate of the crocodile eggs, both internal and external factors. External factors contributing to infertility of crocodile eggs refer to the environmental conditions to which the eggs are exposed to. Usually, these involve unfavorable conditions such as exposure to extreme or unsuitable temperatures, improper handling, and improper transport from the den to the incubators/containers. Internal factors on the other hand refer to the biological deficiencies of the egg itself, owing to the health of the female breeders. Breeders that are stressed, malnourished, and/or subjected to unfavorable conditions are likely to produce infertile eggs and/or have runt hatchlings with a generally weakened immune system. Attached as Annex F10 is the memorandum dated 15 February 2019 from the Technical Section to the former Project Director, elaborating the abovesaid as a factor for the decrease in hatching rate of crocodile eggs, putting forward a recommendation to have a consistent and regulated supply of crocodile feeds.

Shown in Table 6 is the 3rd quarter CY 2022 data for egg collected vis-a-vis egg hatched (natural and assisted hatching). As can be seen, only 17 and three (3) heads of *C.*

mindorensis and *C. porosus* were hatched for July, respectively, resulting in a 4% hatching rate. A total of 374 eggs of both species were infertile (83% of total number of eggs collected) while the remaining 55 (*C. porosus*) were noted to be still incubated. For August 2022, only 27 crocodile heads were hatched from the 113 *C. mindorensis* eggs collected. The remaining eggs were noted to be stored in the incubator until they are hatched. Meanwhile, six (6) *C. porosus* eggs from the July collection were reportedly hatched in August. Moreover, a low hatching rate (10%) was recorded for September with only 47 and nine (9) heads of *C. mindorensis* and *C. porosus* hatched, respectively. A total of 506 eggs (both species) were infertile, comprising 90% of all eggs collected. Therefore, for the 3rd quarter, only 107 eggs from both species were hatched out of the 1,124 eggs collected, equating to a 9.70% hatching rate. The infertility rate on the other hand was computed to have an average of 78.29% (880 out of 1,124 eggs). The Team expresses concern over these rates as the PWRCC should promote the conservation breeding of *C. mindorensis* and commercial breeding of *C. porosus*.

The Team consulted some veterinarians, crocodile experts and handlers/keepers and they elaborated that this high infertility rate can be due to the poor body condition of female breeders. Being undernourished and receiving insufficient nutrients due to limited food intake was one of the main factors identified. The Team deduces that this high infertility rate is the result of the irregular and insufficient feeding of crocodiles in the Center since the start of the new management in 2021.

Table 6. Crocodile eggs collected and hatched for the 3rd Quarter of CY 2022									
	July 2022			August 2022			September 2022		
	Cm	Cp	TOTAL	Cm	Cp	TOTAL	Cm	Cp	TOTAL
No. of Active Nest	11	17	28	4	0	4	15	8	23
No. of Egg Collected	217	232	449	113	0	113	330	232	562
No. of Egg Hatched	17	3	20	27	6	33	47	9	56
Total	8%	1%	4%	24%			14%	4%	10%

*Cm - *Crocodylus mindorensis*, Cp - *Crocodylus porosus*

Recommendations:

Relative to the recommendations on the regular and sufficient feeding of all wildlife in the PWRCC, the management is also advised to provide additional sources of nutrients for wildlife such as vitamins/supplements. Animal keepers proposed the replenishment of methylene blue and other supplements to further improve the health of wildlife. Consequently, procurement of serviceable incubators is highly recommended whenever possible. The purchase of such may be reflected in the Center’s Work and Financial Plan (WFP) and Project Procurement Management Planning (PPMP).

➤ ***Domesticated animals are starting to proliferate in the Center.***

The PWRCC as a designated Wildlife Rescue Center should prohibit the presence of domesticated animals. Several stray and pet cats were observed all throughout the premises of the Center. Some of these animals seemed to be well fed and clean while others appeared sickly and emaciated. To add, a dog and a domesticated pig were also seen inside the establishment. Most of the domesticated animals at the Center are owned by some of the PWRCC personnel. In 2018, the problem regarding the presence of stray and domesticated

animals in the Center was already addressed. The Chief of the Technical Section submitted to the then PWRCC Project Director a Memorandum (Annex F11) proposing eradication measures to avoid and address the growing population of strays in the Center, which was accordingly adopted by the management. However, with the change of management of PWRCC, pets are allowed in the vicinity. Pictures are shown in Annex E. This matter must be promptly taken into consideration as aside from being possible carriers of diseases, stray animals also pose a threat to the wildlife in the PWRCC. The veterinarian at PWRCC stated that feral cats have already been observed to hunt local avian species.

Recommendations:

Eradication measures to eliminate feral animal population are advised to be implemented in the Center. The same shall also be implemented effectively as soon as possible, given that the welfare of the said animals are taken into account. Pets of personnel must be prohibited within the premises of the PWRCC. Signages can also be installed to inform tourists/visitors of avoidance measures when dealing with stray animals within the Center for the time being.

- **The management allowed tourists to bring their pets inside the premises of the Center.**

The Team noted instances where the management allowed the tourists to bring their pets (*i.e.*, small dog breeds) inside the Center, specifically in the wildlife viewing areas. Ideally, no pets should be brought inside the Center as it can stimulate and influence the wildlife to exhibit instinctual predatory behaviors, especially the crocodiles. To facilitate the strict implementation of this, the former PWRCC management installed tarpaulins/signage stating the prohibition of such by the Center's gate. However, these materials were reported to be recently taken down and removed by the current management. Based on some interviewed tourist receptionists and tour guides, there was a time where one of the crocodiles in the viewing area negatively reacted upon seeing a small dog carried by a visitor. This is an alarming incident as this viewing area shelters most of the Center's largest crocodiles.

Recommendations:

Tarpaulins/Signages must be installed back to inform the visitors of the Do's and Don'ts when touring around the Center. It is recommended to identify an area within the PWRCC where pets can temporarily stay while their owners are inside the premises. This will likely be more convenient to the visitors as they would not need to carry their pets everywhere. In case some visitors insist on bringing their pets inside, PWRCC personnel are encouraged to firmly implement the prohibitions while diligently explaining why such are not allowed.

OVER-ALL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL TEAM

The PWRCC is a government Project that should advocate and advance the conservation of endemic and threatened species. To this end, it should promote the *ex-situ* conservation of freshwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus mindorensis*) whilst also serving the purpose of breeding Saltwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*) for commercial purposes. Given the recent findings of the Team, we have found that the irregularities in the Technical aspect of the Center's management are deliberate. Moreover, the shortcomings observed were the results of not being pro-active, meaning that the conflicts could have been avoided or reduced, if not for the management's delayed responses. Hence, the Team would like to recommend a halt to this mismanagement by vehemently recommending the immediate replacement of the Project Manager of PWRCC.

FINANCIAL ASPECTS

B1. Funds Utilization based on CY 2021 Work and Financial Plan (WFP)

BMB Findings	PWRCC OIC-Manager Response
For CY 2021, to support the operation of the Center, a Php3Million fund (1M from BMB and 2M from Central Office) under the 2021 GAA was downloaded to PWRCC for the implementation of specific activities following specific Work and Financial Plans (WFPs). NO accomplishment report was submitted by the PRWCC relative to the implementation of activities identified in the WFPs (i.e., repair of crocodile breeding pens; repair and maintenance of the submersible pump, elevated water tank, etc.).	<p>The CY 2021 Php3million GAA funds provided by the Central Office and BMB were mostly spent according to its purpose. Crocodile and wildlife feeds were purchased until early part of the current year and repair of one breeding pen was accomplished in November. The cost for payment of laborers were just recently released due to the unavailability of Special Disbursing Officer from PENRO Palawan.</p> <p>Currently ongoing is the repair of another two breeding pens, while the intended repair of elevated tank cannot be pursued due to the lack of supplier to bid mainly because of the very low budget for its repair.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the supposedly repairs and maintenance of electrical transformer and submersible pump were found out to be erroneously classified since according the Animal Keeper III and Administrative Officer I, these items are not for repair but for replacement of units. Hence, it should have been categorized as Capital Outlay instead of MOOE. The budget allocated for these shall be requested instead to be realigned for facility maintenance and improvement, such as repair of footbridge in P6, two (2) service vehicles and two (2) chest freezers, improvement of visitors' waiting area (nipa hut), rehabilitation of photo booth area, and signage destroyed by Typhoon Odette.</p>

Findings:

The PWRCC indeed has not submitted a report to BMB, PENRO Palawan and NRDC covering the 2021 WFP from GAA on the implementation of the activities such as repair of crocodile breeding pens, repair and maintenance of submersible pumps, elevated water tanks, etc. Moreover, there was non-utilization of funds on major activities/programs on CY 2021 WFP.

On 01 March 2021, BMB issued a Sub-Allotment Advice (SAA) No. 2021-03-002 based on approved WFP charged to BMB GAA amounting to One Million Pesos (PhP1,000,000.00) to PENRO Palawan (Annex G1). Likewise, the DENR Central Office granted SAA NO. 2021-05-369 on 04 May 2021 in line with the approved WFP (Annex G2) in the amount of Two Million Pesos (PhP2,000,000.00). The total amount downloaded to PENRO Palawan's account was Three Million Pesos (PhP3,000,000.00) to cover the expenses of PWRCC.

The Team requested data on the utilization of funds from PENRO Palawan and found that out of the GAA funds of Php3 Million, PWRCC only utilized a budget of One Million Eight Hundred Seventy-Eight Thousand Three Hundred and 52/100 Pesos (PhP 1,878,301.52), per the fund utilization report of PENRO Palawan (Annex G3). The total utilizations per budget item is tabulated in Table 7.

Table 7. PWRCC Utilization					
BMB GAA (1 Million)			CENTRAL OFFICE GAA (2 Million)		
PAP	COST	UTILIZATION	PAP	COST	UTILIZATION
Food/feeds for <i>C. porosus</i>	80,000.00	557,806.18	Food/feeds for <i>C. porosus</i>	732,089.93	412,503.82
Food/feeds for <i>C. mindorensis</i>	40,000.00		Food/feeds for <i>C. mindorensis</i>	342,913.07	
DNA Test of <i>C. mindorensis</i>	200,000.00	-	Food/feeds for other captive wildlife	405,000	14,789.70
Crocodile and other wildlife medicines	20,000.00	-	Repair & maintenance of the following: - Electrical transformer - Submersible pump - Elevated water tank	320,000 155,000 45,000	NO utilization
Food/feeds for other captive wildlife	90,000.00	434,168.55			238,653.00
Repair of crocodile breeding pens	300,000	-			212,355.00
Project Administration - Crocodile Conservation Week - Inspection and monitoring of loaned crocodiles - Orientation activities on Crocodile Habitat Assessment	60,000.00 180,000.00 30,000.00	7,615.27 - -			
TOTAL	1,000,000.00	999,590.00		2,000,000.00	878,301.52
% Utilization		99.96%			43.92%

As reflected in the table, 99.96% of the funds from the BMB GAA was utilized while only 43.92% of the funds from the DENR Central Office GAA was utilized by the PWRCC. For the procurement of wildlife food/feeds, the budget allotted for each crocodile species was reported to be merged. However, it can be observed that the utilization was evidently higher than the supposed budget allocation. For instance, wildlife food/feeds from the BMB GAA only has a cumulative budget of PhP 120,000.00 but PhP 557,806.18 was accrued for its procurement. This was because the budget allocated for other items (i.e., DNA testing) were utilized. On the contrary, there was an under-utilization of the budget allocated for wildlife food/feeds from the DENR Central Office GAA. The cumulative budget for the feeds of both crocodile species is PhP 1,075,003.00, however, only PhP 412,503.82 was utilized. This was found by the Team to be questionable as these were supposed to be used for the purchase of wildlife food/feeds. Non-utilization of such infers that the wildlife in the Center had not eaten sufficiently since there were only few transactions for the procurement of wildlife food/feeds.

Further, based on the WFP 2021 from BMB GAA, five (5) pens (2nd Quarter - P1 and P2, 3rd Quarter- P3 and P4, and 4th Quarter - P5) were supposed to be repaired in 2021 with an allotted budget of PhP 300,000. The total cost of materials (180 bags of cement, construction materials, etc.) purchased by the PWRCC was PhP 212,355.00. This purchase was noted to be for the repair of the said five (5) pens. However, only one breeding pen was repaired in November 2021. The PWRCC personnel, mostly animal keepers, were contracted to do the repairs during their day-offs from Oct. 26-Nov. 7, 2021. Nonetheless, the payment for their labor amounting to PhP 22,400.00 was only released in July 2022. Currently, the remaining budget for the pen repairs is PhP 65,245.00 which can be used for the payment of labor costs. During the Assessment, it was observed that the on-going repair of P44 and P45 breeding pens are still being done by animal keepers during their duties. The Team finds this questionable since this type of work is not specified in the Terms of Reference of their contracts, and rendering other works during their duties implies that they will not be compensated for their labor.

As for the repair of the elevated tank, electrical transformer and submersible pump, there was no fund utilization noted.

Recommendations:

All repairs/replacement/new purchase of these government equipment are vital in the operations of the Center. Thus, these must be done during the target year. The PWRCC should submit its physical and financial report based on the approved WFP of 2021 where the budget utilized by the Center should be reflected in the aforesaid reports. These reports should serve as the means of verification if the target activities/projects reflected in their WFP were really executed and accomplished. Further, these should be the Management's bases in drafting their WFP for the following year. Since the budget allocated for repair of elevated tanks and submersible pump, repair and maintenance of electrical transformer was not used, a report should be submitted by PWRCC as to where the funds were allocated and utilized. The Center must provide a justification as to the reasons why the target activities did not materialize.

With regard to the ongoing repair of pens, the management should hire laborers since there is a remaining budget which can be utilized for labor costs. This is to ensure that the personnel of the Center can maximize their time in performing their original duties/tasks, especially the animal keepers who are in-charge of taking care of the crocodiles and other wildlife species in the Center. More importantly, hiring laborers will expedite the repair of the pens, further allowing the immediate transfer of breeder crocodiles.

B2. Continuing Budget

BMB Findings	PWRCC OIC-Manager Response
Per Accounting of PENRO Palawan, the PWRCC has a continuing budget from 2021 accrued from the downloaded funds from the Central Office amounting to P1,062,042.50. The said fund is intended for the procurement and purchase of animal feeds for the wildlife at the Center. Hence, the Center has sufficient funds for animal foods/feeds since 2021 but was not utilized by the Center.	No reply from PWRCC

Findings:

The Team verified that the PWRCC has a continuing budget from the DENR Central Office GAA amounting to PhP 1,121,698.48. The Center only utilized PhP 878,301.52, covering only 43.92% of the total budget.

PENRO Palawan noted that the PWRCC has not fully utilized the budget from the DENR Central Office GAA, generating a continuing budget for 2022 (Annex G4). To utilize the said amount, the PWRCC submitted two (2) Purchase Requests (PR) for crocodile feeds and other wildlife feeds for May to December 2022 (Annex G5 and G6) amounting to PhP 554,400.00 and PhP 455,510.00, respectively. This generated a total amount of PhP 1,009,910.00 which was still within the value of the continuing budget. However, the PWRCC submitted 14 other PRs / Disbursement Vouchers amounting to PhP 367,110.44 while the bidding for the above-mentioned was on-going. For this reason, the remaining budget was found to be insufficient for the payment of the winning bidder (A3MT Consumer Goods Trading).

Moreover, it was found by the Team that the PWRCC has no approved WFP submitted for the utilization of the continuing budget. Hence, the PWRCC management has no basis in making the said purchase requests. The PWRCC management should have utilized the budget based on its intended purpose only. It is reminded that any changes or realignment to be made must be approved by the Office to which the fund originated.

Recommendations:

Proper coordination with PENRO Palawan for the disbursement of GAA funds is needed.

B3. Additional Findings/Observations:

- *Cashier/Ticket Booth Receptionist/Collecting Officers have no fidelity bond from Bureau of Treasury (BTr) in compliance with the Public Bonding Law*

During the interview with the two (2) Cashiers/Ticket Booth Receptionists/Collecting Officers, they revealed that they are not bonded. Their duties as Cashier/Collecting Officer require the possession, custody, or control of public funds for which they are accountable and must be bonded consistent with the provisions of Treasury Circular No. 02-2019 on Section 4.1.4 which states that *"Accountable Officers who are secondarily accountable to a person who is primarily accountable to public funds and properties of his/her Government Agency."* Noting that PWRCC staff handles money as the Photo Booth Cashier/s and the personnel who are in-charge of depositing the daily collections of the Center, a fidelity bond is required.

The Project Manager justified that PWRCC submitted to NRDC the application of fidelity bond on 13 August 2022 (Annex G7) of herself, Ms. Lalaine Joy V. Basaya and Ms. Princess Dawn A. Bacani as both Ticket Booth Receptionist/Cashier. However, the NRDC Accountant opined that the request for the bonding of Ms. Bacani and Ms. Basaya was put on hold due to lack of requirements. This was relayed to the Project Manager through verbal communication.

Recommendations:

The PWRCC Management should provide all accountable officers with necessary knowledge, information and training regarding their functions and responsibilities including rules and regulations needed in their effective performance of their tasks. The Cashier should secure a Fidelity Bond from the Bureau of Treasury in accordance with all the provisions of Treasury Circular No. 02-2019 dated 25 April 2019 Revised Omnibus Regulations governing the Fidelity Bonding of Accountable Public Officers; and Section 101 of PD 1445. Accountable Officers: Bond Requirements, which states that:

- (1) *"Every officer of any government agency whose duties permit or require the possession or custody of government funds or property shall be accountable therefor and the safekeeping thereof in conformity with*

law. (2) Every accountable officer shall be properly bonded in accordance with law."

The Project Manager, as Head of the PWRCC, should secure a Fidelity Bond for the Cashier and those personnel holding money and all items with money value such as admission tickets as soon as possible.

➤ ***Finance Personnel primarily assigned as Cashier/Ticket Receptionist was also assigned to various work assignments***

The personnel in charge of Cashiering/Ticket Booth Receptionist were given multiple functions aside from her main work assignment specified on the Contract. They were either Tour Guide/Canvasser/Procurement/Cashier/Ticket Booth Receptionist assigned at the entrance and Photo Booth Cashier, hence, they were rotated every fifteen (15) days which resulted in unfinished work assignments and back logs brought by reshuffling of schedule.

Recommendations:

The Cashier or an AO should maintain a cashbook, Report of Collection and Deposits (ROCD) and such other records for reporting and reconciliation with the accounting records. Multitasking/cross functional duties among personnel only resulted in the absence of check and balance, thus it is highly recommended that this scheme be immediately stopped.

➤ ***Photo Booth Operations have no approval from the NRDC management***

It was observed that the payment received from visitors for handling a crocodile has no Official Receipt (OR). This action violates the provision of Government Accounting and Auditing Manual (GAAM) which provides that:

4.1.2, All collections, either cash or in checks, shall be acknowledged through the issuance of an Official Receipts (OR) – Accountable Form No. 51 or any specific purpose receipts like Real Property Tax Receipt – Accountable Form No. 56, Community Tax Certificate or pre-numbered cash tickets.

The Photo Booth Operation started in September 2021, as noted in the Summary of PWRCC Income and Deposits for CY 2021 (Annex G8). However, it is reiterated that the said Operation has no approval from the NRDC Management. The Project Manager was even instructed to submit a business proposal on the said matter. Likewise, the fee for crocodile handling which costs PhP 60.00 was observed by the Team to have no basis.

Based on interviews, there was a gradual increase in the number of people who wanted to handle crocodiles and/or take a photograph from 2021 to 2022. According to the NRDC Accounting data, the highest income generated from the photo booth was in July 2022 amounting to PhP 357,240.00 (5,954 pax). As of September 2022, the Photo booth/holding fees income comprises 35% of the total gross income (Annex G9).

Recommendations:

The Center's Management should secure a legal basis from the NRDC Management on the operation of the Photo Booth. Hence, they are hereby instructed to submit a procedural guideline on the operation, such as acceptance of payment, issuance of official receipt and others. There should be one (1) person who will receive the payment as Cashier for the whole duration of the Photo Booth Operation to be able to exert accountability for money and records.

Further, PWRCC should abide by the government protocols in the proper handling of crocodiles to avoid incurring stress to animals which will lead to death if not properly managed.

➤ ***Absence of Contract to operate a Mini-Store within the PWRCC Premises***

The mini-store business has been operating sometime in March 2022 without a contract with PWRCC or NRDC. Based on interviews with some personnel, they confirmed that a PWRCC employee is the owner of the mini store which sells soft drinks and other snacks. Accordingly, the payment was given to the Cashier with a daily remittance of Sixty Pesos only (Php 60.00)/day based on a minimum income derived/achieved by the mini store. Likewise, the payment was added to the Photo Booth daily collections which was reflected in the lowest portion of the color-coded Tally Sheets.

Recommendations:

PWRCC personnel should be prohibited from engaging in any business within the Center. Thus, segregating the income derived from the rental of space occupied by mini store should be done to properly account the rental income rather than incorporating it with the Photo Booth income. This is to avoid unrecorded credits/misrepresentation.

➤ ***Absence and Fabrication of Admission Tickets for Adult Visitors***

Pursuant to the GPPB Resolution No. 05-2010, all tickets for PWRCC visitors, which are considered as accountable forms with money value, must be printed and issued by recognized government printers namely, the National Printing Office (NPO), Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and APO Production Unit, Inc. However, it was observed by the Team that the PWRCC reproduced and issued fabricated adult tickets for the park visitors, owing to the lack of supply/ absence of adult printed tickets.

Cashiers admitted that there were no admission tickets issued to adult visitors amounting to forty pesos (Php40.00/head) since August 2022. They requested/reported to the Project Manager via text/chat that there were only five (5) rolls of tickets left (equivalent to 10,000 tickets), which will likely last for less than one (1) month. The Project Manager then sent a Purchase Request (PR) via email on 22 July 2022 (Annex G10), requesting to purchase 65 rolls of adult admission ticket with estimated unit cost of Php1,400.00/roll (total cost of Php91,000.00), for approval and processing of NRDC.

Based on the recent canvass from the National Printing Office (NPO), the quoted price per roll was Php4,500.00 consisting of 2,000 pcs. per roll. Therefore, the NRDC proposed to revise the PR to reflect the actual price. Additionally, the NRDC Finance stated that they cannot process the PR since there was no budget indicated in the approved WFP of PWRCC. To date, the NRDC is working on the approval of the 2nd supplemental budget which includes the purchase of the admission tickets, among others.

To augment this, the Center issued temporary admission tickets for adults (Annex G11). These tickets were pre-numbered based on the last original pre-numbered ticket printed and issued by the NPO. Likewise, by glance, the new ticket had the same physical features except for the kind of paper used.

Recommendations:

Admission Tickets should be requested before they run out. There should also be proper planning for all accountable forms used in the Project Operations such as official receipts, admission tickets for senior citizen, adult, children, cashbook for SCO and SDO. This will be

needed in compliance with Accounting and COA rules on all cash and cash items to record it properly. Supplementary, the Report of Accountability for Accountable Forms (RAAF) will also serve as an indication per month on the number of tickets issued and ending balance of ticket as indicated in the serial numbers.

PWRCC should coordinate with the recognized government printers to undertake the printing of accountable forms for other government agencies as provided or under Section 29 of RA 9970. They must also prepare for the technical specifications which shall include among others the prescribed security features, quantity, and target completion time.

OVER-ALL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINANCIAL TEAM

The PWRCC Management should have control on financial processes including collection, issuance of admission tickets/official receipts inventory, monitoring and etc. Hence, the Project Manager, being the Head of the Center, should facilitate submission of reports regarding administrative and financial matters of the PWRCC operations, based on DAO 2020-10. After thorough evaluation of the findings, the Team respectfully recommends the immediate replacement of the Project Manager of PWRCC.

MANAGEMENT ASPECTS

C1. Work Schedule and Bayanihan Scheme

BMB Findings	PWRCC OIC-Manager Response
<p>The management adopted a 2-3 working days a week schedule for all personnel under contracts of service (COS) status. Aside from rendering compliance to the reduction of the on-site workforce during the pandemic, the skeletal workforce was implemented due to limited funds/income generated by the Center.</p> <p>However, this was found to be limiting the smooth operation of the Center as indispensable personnel such as Animal Keepers, who were vital in ensuring the continuous operation of the PWRCC, were also subjected to the said schedules. Moreover, unscheduled and/or emergency operations such as retrieval of wildlife, cleaning of the Center, (clearing operations or "Bayanihan" due to typhoon Odette), and other activities that need prompt action were reportedly not taken into consideration and were thereby exempted from the provision of compensation, since it was not covered by the scheduled workforce.</p>	<p>Work schedule of personnel was trimmed down on March 2021 due to limited funds to finance the salaries. Around March 2022, when visitors started to surge, additional days were granted to few individuals whose duties are essential to the day-to-day operations of the Center.</p> <p>There was never an instance where continuous operation was hampered because of lack of personnel to oversee the activities. It was made sure that senior animal keepers were interchangeably scheduled to ensure smooth operations. Priority was given to younger animal keepers who have their respective areas of responsibility and have to take care of crocodiles and other wildlife animals in various pens. In instances when PENRO-Palawan or PCSO ask for technical assistance, the undersigned allows younger keepers to join the activity for them to be exposed and be oriented with the kind of work that they will soon be doing once the older ones retire. As of July, the workforce is 90% back to normal. As to the clearing of the Center due to the aftermath of Typhoon Odette, the personnel were the ones who volunteered to help clean the area even out of their work schedule due to their genuine concern for their place of work. It was made clear that those days will not be counted as official because we were working on a limited budget, as tour operation was not yet normalized.</p>

Findings:

There was indeed a skeletal workforce adopted by the management during the pandemic (CY 2021) in compliance to the reduction of workforce during the pandemic.

This was not denied by the OIC Project Manager and she further justified that the same was due to the limited funds to finance the salaries of the personnel. However, there were issues regarding the allocation of the work schedule as some of the personnel were not favored and were only given a one-day per week schedule. Since the contractuels are on a no-work, no-pay basis, it created an impression of biased treatment among the personnel, as the younger ones were given more schedule in a week than the older ones, who have more supervisory experience to oversee the operations in the Center. The team likewise verified the previous findings of the BMB that animal keepers, who were indispensable personnel in the Center, were also subjected to a 2-3 days work week schedule on a shifting basis. For instance, only one animal keeper is in charge for one day to feed all the wildlife animals in the Center and another one animal keeper is in charge in the farming (crocodiles) unit, which makes it difficult for them to focus on the caring and rearing of the animals.

In general, although the Project Manager justified that the continuous operation of the Center was not hampered, it was observed that personnel had difficulty in focusing on their assigned tasks because they were rotated to different tasks daily on a 15-day schedule. When the Project Manager was asked why she implements rotational tasking every half of the month, she said that she implemented that scheme so that the employees can be multitasking. However, this scheme has been implemented for more than a year, which only resulted in the prejudice of the welfare of the animals and the cleanliness of the Center.

At present, the Center is no longer implementing the 2-3 days work-week schedule. Since July 2022, the workforce has been 90% back to normal. This October 2022, all of its personnel are now working 100% in a week-schedule. However, the 15-day rotational work scheme still continues. With regard to the unscheduled and/or emergency operations that need prompt action such as clearing operations due to typhoon "Odette" and weekly Bayanihan schedules, this was verified to be voluntary on the part of some of the personnel. However, other personnel were complaining about the Bayanihan schedule during CY 2021 because the weekly Bayanihan was scheduled on their day-offs, which made them feel as being compelled to attend such weekly activity. There were threats of "*Alam na this*", meaning, if they do not participate in the weekly Bayanihan, their contracts might not be renewed. It was a burden for some because the scheduled Bayanihan was done without pay and during their day-offs.

Some of these personnel even mentioned that there is one personnel who is not compelled to join the Bayanihan as that personnel was favored by the Project Manager. Further, the management, instead of outsourcing a chainsaw operator for the clearing operations after the Typhoon Odette, opted to assign one of the animal keepers (who knew how to operate the chainsaw) to do the task. The Project Manager assured that he will be compensated for his work, but until now, he was not yet given the compensation for the work done. In contrast, during the Team's interview with the Personnel and Supply Officer of the Center, she mentioned that the personnel who was then tasked to operate the chainsaw was already given the appropriate compensation. Additionally, personnel who were on official travel during the pandemic were not given compensation as well because the said travel was not within their assigned schedule.

Recommendations:

It is therefore recommended that the 15-day rotational work scheme be immediately stopped and that the employees be assigned to a specific task so that they can focus on their particular assigned work. As observed during the site visit, the 15-day rotational work is not an effective way to inculcate multitasking to the employees, in fact, it only resulted in various issues within the Center such as compromised health of the crocodiles and other wildlife animals, cleanliness of the Center, including the overall management system of the Center. Further, the Project Manager should assign the tasks based on the expertise and technical knowledge of each personnel for them to efficiently perform their duties with minimal supervision.

It is also advised that the Bayanihan be scheduled on a specific day of the week when the majority of the employees can attend and participate. The management should clearly understand that travelling to the Center just to comply with the Bayanihan activity will incur cost (transportation) to the employees, especially those who are on their day-offs. Since this activity is voluntary and not paid, it should not be obligatory and should be implemented with due consideration to employees. Furthermore, "*alam na this*" or other remarks that impose implication on the part of the employees that their contracts might not be renewed should they not volunteer in the Bayanihan, is not a conventional way to encourage employees to take part in the activity.

With regard to the non-payment of compensation, the personnel who operated the chainsaw during typhoon Odette should be given appropriate compensation in accordance to Article 89 (c) of the Labor Code of the Philippines which provides that:

Art. 89. Emergency overtime work. Any employee may be required by the employer to perform overtime work in any of the following cases:

c. When there is urgent work to be performed on machines, installations, or equipment, in order to avoid serious loss or damage to the employer or some other cause of similar nature;

Any employee required to render overtime work under this Article shall be paid the additional compensation required in this Chapter.

In view of the foregoing, it is rightful that the personnel who rendered work during the said emergency be paid accordingly. Lastly, the employees' attendance should be the basis of their compensation, thus, registering through the biometric and in logbooks will be attached for the processing of their payroll. Employees should also attach their accomplishment reports for the processing of the same. For employees on official travel outside their work schedules, approved Travel Orders should be attached for the processing of their payroll.

C2. DIVIDE AMONG PWRCC PERSONNEL

BMB Findings	PWRCC OIC-Manager Response
The current management of the Center had allegedly created a divide among its personnel with its biased treatment for selected employees. During the assessment, the team found it hard to identify the focal person/s to consult or interview since the new management has reorganized its staff. This was seen by the team as an inefficient initiative of the management as the employee's individual skills, forte, and expertise were somehow overlooked and were not taken into consideration.	It is vehemently denied that there is a divide among the personnel. The undersigned was and is never biased of her treatment to all. There was no documentation regarding the issue, no write-up as to the interviews conducted by BMB to support this claim and the undersigned feels that she is treating everyone fairly.

Findings:

The findings of the BMB were verified to be true. There is indeed a division among the personnel of the Center due to the biased and partial treatment of the Project Manager to some of its personnel. Others were complaining that there were special attention and preferences given to some personnel such as creation of separate group chat for the preferred and favorable personnel. Only those included in the separate group chat were given special instructions while others, those not included, were treated as non-existent or worthless as their opinions/comments, being the Unit Heads and/or one with technical expertise, were not considered or by-passed. This created an impression among the personnel that others, not included in the group chat, are treated as an outcast and it created a barrier among other personnel to reach out with their Project Manager.

A process flow and hierarchy of authority is not being followed by the Center. Some directives come directly from the Project Manager to the staff without the knowledge of the Unit Head. This resulted in the Unit Head/s feeling neglected due to the by-pass of his/her authority.

Recommendations:

The Project Manager should not give preferential attention and privileges to specific employee/s. Section 4 (c) of Republic Act No, 6713 provides that a public official shall observe justness and sincerity and shall not discriminate against anyone. All public officials shall abide with this specific provision provided by law. The divide among personnel clearly affects the camaraderie within them. Moreso, it was also observed that the overall operations of the Center were affected due to factions thereat.

A process flow chart per transaction and an explicit organizational chart, which will serve as the management's guide should be drafted and the management should observe hierarchy of authority. Each unit should have a designated Unit Head/Point Person who will monitor the operations/activities in each area concerned. The Project Manager should empower these Unit Heads and that the "by-passing" be completely eliminated within the management. This would therefore allow the Unit Heads to supervise their subordinates and provide appropriate instructions as regards the daily operations of the Center.

C3. CONTRACTS OF SERVICE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

BMB Findings	PWRCC OIC-Manager Response
Since the recent transfer of the management of the Center to NRDC in 2021, copies of the original signed contracts were not provided to COS personnel. The terms of references (TORs) were also allegedly changed without the concerned personnel's knowledge and/or prior consultation.	Contracts of service are filed in their respective 201 files and everybody can ask for copies from the Personnel Officer anytime, however, there is no evidence of any request made by any of the personnel. It is not true that Terms of References or duties were changed without concerned personnel's knowledge because they were always instructed to read their contracts before they sign and they were fully informed of new duties once the bi-monthly work schedule is issued. Assignment of new duties are based on the lack of manpower of other Units where the undersigned evaluated the need to augment such Unit.

Findings:

According to some personnel interviewed, even before the administration of OIC Project Manager, copies of original signed contracts were not provided to COS personnel, but were kept in their respective 201 files, which the personnel may request at anytime. Further, the personnel were informed of their contracts and instructed to read their contracts before signing the same. With respect to the terms of reference, the reason why there was an allegation that they were changed without the concerned personnel's knowledge and/or prior consultation was because they were only informed of their new duties once the 15-day work schedule was issued. Since they were assigned to a rotational task scheme, their terms of reference were different from the actual assigned work. Comparing the Contracts covering January-June 2022 (Annex H1) and Contracts covering July-December 2022 (Annex H2), it can be noted that modifications were made in the employees' TORs.

Recommendations:

Terms of Reference (TOR) in the Contracts duly signed by the management and the personnel should not be overlooked and should strictly be followed. The TOR should clearly specify the tasks, duties, and responsibilities of the employees. It is also recommended to conduct an orientation regarding the TOR indicated in the Contracts so that they will be informed of their specific work/tasks. Orientation should be conducted by the Personnel Section as regards reporting and their duties and responsibilities. Prior to contract signing, the Personnel should explicitly explain the contents of the Contract/s to each personnel, especially if changes/modifications were made in their TORs. Lastly, a copy of the employees' contracts should be automatically given to them, not upon request.

It is also recommended that COS personnel should be evaluated based on their performance and accomplishments of their assigned tasks prior to renewal of their contracts. Accomplishment reports prepared every half of the month should be compiled and this will serve as a reference for evaluation. Additionally, the Unit Heads should also be able to evaluate the staff who are under their supervision. Thereafter, the evaluation of the Unit Heads should be referred/ forwarded to the Project Manager for review and computation of the final rating.

C4. Additional Findings/Observations:

➤ Poor planning and late preparation of necessary Plans

The management of the PWRCC has poor planning skills and lacks technical knowledge in the preparation of WFP, PPMP, and Annual Procurement Plan (APP), which

resulted in the prejudice of the Center. (e.g., lack of funds for indispensable assets like freezers for the storage of meat, lack of fund for the repair or purchase of the water tank, insufficiency of fund for the feeds of wildlife and crocodiles, very low allotted budget cost for the feeds, hence no supplier is willing to bid, and so forth).

It is only the Project Manager who drafts or prepares the Work and Financial Plan and usually, the submission of the same is late. Hence, their WFP was not considered by the NRDC in the preparation of the Annual Procurement Plan. It is also observed that the Project Manager micro manages each task in the Center instead of delegating the tasks to the Unit Head and assigned personnel.

Recommendations:

It is therefore recommended for the Center to have a technical personnel preferably a Planning Officer to facilitate the preparation and submission of the said plans on time. The Project Manager should not micromanage each task and practice the delegation of tasks to the Unit Head and assigned personnel. Supplementary, the Project Manager should assign the tasks based on their technical expertise, knowledge and skills.

“Segregation of duties” is a key internal control intended to minimize the occurrence of errors or fraud by ensuring that no employee has the ability to both perpetrate and conceal errors or fraud in the normal course of their duties, thus, implementing segregation of duties in the Center in order to have a check and balance on each work is deemed necessary. The key to good management is proper planning. Therefore, it is recommended for the Project Manager to execute proper planning. The Manager must involve and include the personnel/staff in the planning process so that they can reflect the equipment or supplies needed for the operation of the Center. This must be done earlier to avoid late submission to the NRDC.

➤ *Accountability of public funds*

The assigned collecting officers were under Contracts of Service and were rotated on a 15-day schedule. Accountability of public funds may be difficult when an employee performing vital function in the Center is only a contractual employee and is not permanently assigned in that position. The disbursing officer who handles petty cash funds, according to the personnel, is also the Project Manager.

Recommendations:

It is therefore recommended to assign permanent staff either from NRDC or PENRO Palawan who will be designated as a Disbursing Officer, Collecting Officer, and a Petty Cash Custodian. Since duties of the above-mentioned positions involve finance, it therefore comes with greater accountability. Personnel to be appointed in the said positions should be equipped with technical knowledge and have work experiences related to the field.

➤ *Failure to abide with the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards*

The Project Manager allegedly uttered inappropriate, foul and derogatory words on multiple occasions and during assembly meetings. According to personnel interviewed, the reason why the Project Manager uttered inappropriate words during the assembly is that one of the crocodiles had escaped. Further, some personnel also revealed that during an assembly meeting last 20 July 2022, the Project Manager accused them of disclosing issues/concerns of the Center to BMB and PENRO Palawan during the monitoring and assessment conducted last 22-24 March 2022. During the said meeting, the Project Manager allegedly directed foul and

derogatory remarks to the employees. Last 21 July 2022, following the incident that happened during the General Assembly last 20 July 2022, a Reprimand Memorandum was addressed to the employee who interrupted the Project Manager from swearing. (Annex H3). Likewise, the Explanation Letter of the "reprimanded personnel" is hereto attached as Annex H4. Based on the response letter of the employee, he indeed interrupted the Project Manager during the assembly, but he immediately refrained from speaking when the Project Manager instructed him to cease. The behavior of the employee did not intend to disrespect the Manager, but it merely wishes to stop the Project Manager from using inappropriate and foul words against them. The said employee likewise appeared personally in the Project Manager's office to sincerely apologize for what had happened.

However, the Project Manager, being a public officer, should observe self-restraint and proper decorum in dealing with the employees, especially that she is the In-Charge of the overall management and operations of the Center.

Recommendations:

The Project Manager, being an employee of a national government project, should strictly observe and comply with the code of conduct and ethical standards in executing her official duties, in accordance with Republic Act No. 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees). Section 4 (b) of the Act further provides that, *"Public officials and employees shall perform and discharge their duties with the highest degree of excellence, professionalism, intelligence and skill. They shall enter public service with utmost devotion and dedication to duty. They shall endeavor to discourage wrong perceptions of their roles as dispensers or peddlers of undue patronage."*

Moreover, during General Assemblies, it is suggested that an Agenda be followed. The Secretary should take the minutes of the Meeting in order to have a record of the topics discussed during the assembly. In doing so, suggestions/recommendations of the employees will be taken down and putting them into writing should no longer be necessary.

➤ *Suggestions/recommendations from employees were neglected*

Suggestions/recommendations raised by employees were not taken into consideration by the Project Manager. Some personnel tried to convey their recommendations/suggestions to the Project Manager during general assemblies but none of their suggestions were considered. As a result, employees became hesitant in expressing their ideas and in voicing out their concerns regarding their work.

Further, when the Project Manager was asked whether there had been an instance where she denied the suggestion of the employees, she stated none, which contradicted the statements of a number of employees that we have interviewed. The Project Manager further said that all suggestions/recommendations should be put into writing before she can address the suggestions.

Recommendations:

It is therefore recommended that suggestion boxes be placed around the Center to allow employees and even visitors to express their recommendations and suggestions freely. The Project Manager should be nondiscriminatory and consider the suggestions/ideas of the employees for the betterment of the Center since these employees who happen to have a number of suggestions are mostly pioneers and have indispensable expertise.

➤ ***Misalignment of duties/responsibilities***

Educational background of employees was not aligned with the duties/responsibilities assigned to them. Some of the employees are not equipped with the required technical knowledge in their assigned tasks. During the interview with the personnel, most of their educational backgrounds are not in line with their present functions.

Recommendations:

It is therefore recommended for the Project Manager to evaluate and assess the capabilities and technical knowledge of the personnel to align with their educational background and experience. Moreso, to further capacitate the Center's employees, it is advised to let the personnel attend Learning Events/Trainings/Seminars/Workshops relevant to the duties/responsibilities assigned to them. Additionally, the management should assign the employees tasks based on their skills, knowledge and expertise and it is strongly advised to stop the rotational tasking every half of the month so that the employees can focus on their respective specific work.

➤ ***Safekeeping of inventory records***

The inventory records of the crocodiles and other wildlife species were taken by the Project Manager from the Unit Head of the Farming Section and Wildlife Section and kept solely under her custody. As per interview to the personnel concerned, previously he/she has the records of the inventory of crocodiles in his area. However, when the new administration started, it was taken from her/him. Hence, should there be new crocodiles or hatchlings at the Center, they cannot ascertain the last number of the crocodile inventory unless the inventory record was given to them.

Recommendations:

The Project Manager should turn over the Inventory Records to the Unit Head or Point Person in charge of overseeing the Farming and Wildlife Section so that they may have a reference in their work and these Unit Heads would be technically equipped to spearhead the activities in their Sections. As to the Project Manager, she should allow these Unit Heads to report to her regarding the operations within the Farming and Wildlife Section.

➤ ***Repair of breeding pens***

Repair of breeding pens were also assigned to the Center's personnel, mostly animal keepers. The Center opted not to hire laborers to do the job. On days they were assigned to farming, instead of feeding the crocodiles, they will be working on the repair of breeding pens. That means that repairs of pens are done within their schedules, and these personnel were not paid separately.

Recommendations:

The PWRCC Management should hire laborers to do the repair of pens so that the working schedule of animal keepers will not be compromised. The repair of breeding pens should be a separate work. If the management wishes to finish the repair of pens faster, laborers should therefore be hired. Thus, hiring laborers will allow the animal keepers to focus on their original tasks.

OVER-ALL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

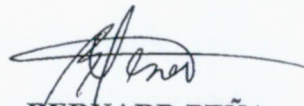
In conclusion, the Team verified and observed that the Project Manager is not equipped with technical knowledge in operating the Center. She may have been the head of the Human Resource Division, however, she lacks the good managerial and leadership skills to lead and create a harmonious relationship among the personnel. This is evident from the answers and responses provided by many of the employees during the interview, the observations conducted around the Center and the documents handed to the team. Further, numerous issues and concerns arose from her administration, as compared to the previous administrations, which concluded that she lacks the technical knowledge and leadership skills. Hence, the Management team therefore recommends that the Project Manager be immediately replaced.


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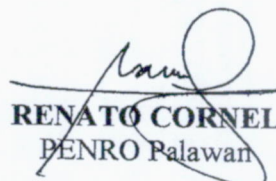

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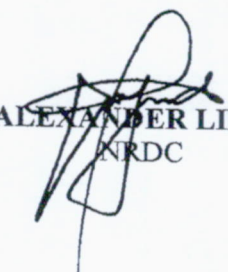

JESSICA ESMAEL
BMB

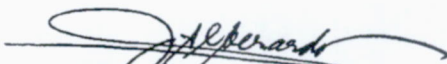

ATTY. JAZMIN ALTEA
DENR MIMAROPA


RHODORA UBANI
PENRO Palawan


RENATO CORNEL
PENRO Palawan


BELINDA ABREA
PENRO Palawan


ALEXANDER LINDE
NRDC


NORA BERNARDO
NRDC



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Natural Resources Development Corporation

9th Flr. DENR Bldg., 1515 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila

Tel. No. 8521-9421 / 8521-9455

Website: <http://nrdc.denr.gov.ph> Email: records.nrdc@gmail.com

SPECIAL ORDER

NO. 2022-008

MAR 25 2022

SUBJECT: RENEWING THE DESIGNATION OF MS. GINA M. VARILLA, HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OFFICER III, AS HEAD, MANAGEMENT SERVICES AND OIC-PROJECT MANAGER, IN CONCURRENT CAPACITY, OF THE PALAWAN WILDLIFE RESCUE AND CONSERVATION CENTER

In the exigency of the service and pursuant to DENR Administrative Order No. 2020-10 transferring the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center (PWRCC) from the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) to the Natural Resources Development Corporation (NRDC), the designation of **MS. GINA M. VARILLA**, *Human Resource Management Officer III*, as Head, Management Services and OIC-Project Manager, in Concurrent Capacity, of the PWRCC in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, is hereby renewed.

As such, she shall report to the Chief or OIC of the Operations Division and perform the duties and responsibilities appurtenant to her designation, including:

- a. Manage, supervise, and coordinate the day-to-day operations of the PWRCC, including all units of administrative and technical services, financial management, procurement, and undertake issue resolution;
- b. Coordinate with project partners and other stakeholders (i.e., BMB, DENR-MIMAROPA Region, PENRO-Palawan, CENRO-Puerto Princesa, Provincial Government of Palawan, City Mayor's Office, Barangay Irawan, Puerto Princesa City Tourism Office, DPWH, PCSO, etc.) on matters pertaining to the PWRCC and represent PWRCC in local inter-agency meetings or fora;
- c. Prepare and implement the project's approved annual Work and Financial Plan (WFP), Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP), and Operating Budget;
- d. Conduct study and consultations with tourist agencies and other stakeholders in Palawan regarding the possible increase in ticket prices;
- e. Develop marketing strategies and gather all necessary data/information for a PWRCC Marketing Plan;
- f. Conduct completed staff work for the execution of lease contracts with potential locators in PWRCC;
- g. Complete the PWRCC's Rationalization Plan;
- h. Prepare timely financial reports, annual reports, technical reports, incident reports, and other reports as may be required by the Management and project partners;
- i. Maintain updated inventories of documents, records, equipment, facilities, supplies and materials, crocodiles and wildlife, personnel, funds, etc.;
- j. Establish and implement policies and guidelines pertaining to administrative and personnel matters, subject to the provisions and limitations of existing government laws, rules and regulations;
- k. Ensure the health and welfare of crocodiles and other wildlife under the custody of the PWRCC;

- l. Determine and implement cost-cutting measures while ensuring adequate maintenance of the Center and the overall welfare of crocodiles and wildlife;
- m. Ensure that COVID-19 minimum health standards and protocol are established in the Center and strictly complied with by PWRCC personnel and visitors;
- n. Supervise all PWRCC personnel in the performance of their respective duties and responsibilities and ensure clear accountabilities and work arrangements;
- o. Develop performance indicators and targets patterned after CSC's Individual Performance Commitment Review (IPCR) for all PWRCC personnel;
- p. Conduct investigations and fact-finding missions, as instructed and authorized by the Head, Operations Division, Executive Vice President, and/or the President and CEO;
- q. Address audit observation memoranda (AOMs) and findings of the Commission on Audit on PWRCC operations;
- r. Review and ensure completeness of PWRCC vouchers and other documents before submission to the NRDC Central Office; and
- s. Perform other tasks to be instructed by the Head, Operations Division, Executive Vice President, and the President and CEO.

The OIC-Project Manager shall submit regular monthly reports to the Management on the performance of and compliance with the above-mentioned duties and responsibilities.

Further, the OIC-Project Manager is hereby authorized to approve, sign, and issue the following for the PWRCC:

- a. Budget utilization slips for expenses relative to the operation of PWRCC;
- b. Purchase requests below P15,000.00;
- c. Official business/field work permits of PWRCC personnel;
- d. Daily Time Records and Accomplishment Reports of PWRCC personnel;
- e. Travel Orders of PWRCC personnel;
- f. Requests from the LGU, PCSD, local communities, and other project partners for assistance in conducting field surveys and other activities involving wild populations of crocodiles and their habitats;
- g. Notices on work schedule of PWRCC personnel in light of reduced activities due to the pandemic;
- h. Other documents and communications, subject to clearance by the Executive Vice President and/or the President and CEO.

As OIC-Project Manager, Ms. Varilla shall be entitled to reimburse representation expenses in accordance with the approved PWRCC Operating Budget chargeable against PWRCC funds, subject to existing government rules and regulations.

This Order takes effect immediately. All orders/issuances inconsistent herewith are deemed amended or superseded.

DEMETRIO L. IGNACIO, JR., CESO I
Executive Vice President and
Acting President, in Concurrent Capacity



Natural Resources Development Corporation
Office of the President



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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Natural Resources Development Corporation

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Tel. No. 8521-9421 Fax No. 8521-9466
Website: <http://nrdc.denr.gov.ph> Email: admin-nrdc@denr.gov.ph

29 December 2020

RICARDO L. CALDERON, CESO III

OIC, Assistant Secretary for Climate Change, and
Director, Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB)
Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center
Diliman, Quezon City

MA. LOURDES G. FERRER, CESO IV

Regional Executive Director
DENR-MIMAROPA Region
L&S Building, Roxas Boulevard
Ermita, Manila

Dear **Assistant Secretary Calderon** and **Director Ferrer**:

DENR Administrative Order (DAO) No. 2020-10, dated 17 September 2020, transferred the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center (PWRCC) from the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) to the Natural Resources Development Corporation (NRDC), to take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation. The BMB published the DAO on 10 November 2020. Thereafter, NRDC issued a letter, dated 25 November 2020, to DENR-BMB and DENR-MIMAROPA Region, expressing its intent to take over on 04 January 2021.

Due to the required legal procedures, the NRDC will be unable to take over the PWRCC operations on 04 January 2020 as initially planned. The inventory of documents, records, equipment, facilities, supplies and materials, personnel, budget, etc. is still ongoing. The NRDC is also currently reviewing the draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between and among BMB, DENR-MIMAROPA Region and NRDC, for further review of the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) and approval by the NRDC Board of Directors. Both measures are provided in DAO No. 2020-10.

In this regard, we are deferring the take-over of PWRCC to 01 March 2021. This is consistent with the transition period of three (3) months, as provided in DAO No. 2020-10. Meanwhile, and with the indulgence of BMB and DENR-MIMAROPA Region, we would like to request for the following matters, in coordination with NRDC:

1. BMB and DENR-MIMAROPA Region to continue operation of the PWRCC until the take-over by NRDC.
2. Retention of DENR-MIMAROPA Region permanent personnel until appropriate personnel have been appointed/designated by NRDC.
3. Facilitate the completion of the joint inventory and turn-over of documents, records, equipment, facilities, supplies and materials, personnel, budget, etc.
4. Procurement of necessary materials and supplies until replenishments can be procured by NRDC.
5. Signing and issuance of contracts to the Contract of Service personnel for the period January-February 2021.
6. Other matters necessary for the smooth transition of operation from BMB and DENR-MIMAROPA Region to NRDC.

We would like to inform you that the 2020 year-end cash balance of the PWRCC Trust Fund with NRDC is projected at P6,669,255.31. Given a "business-as-usual" scenario, the cash balance will only be able to fund the operation of PWRCC until June/July 2021, assuming no additional funding from DENR and no revenues to be generated by the Center due to the pandemic.

As reference, the PWRCC generated only P38.5K since the start of the pandemic period in March 2020, for a total revenue of P2.2M for FY2020, if pre-pandemic operations are included. PWRCC's expenses for FY2020, on the other hand, amounts to P10.7M.

In view of the current and anticipated continuing losses of PWRCC, we kindly request that its current cash balance be used wisely to ensure that the Center has enough funds to maintain itself until the end of the pandemic period (now projected to last until 2022). Considering that NRDC does not receive funds from the General Appropriations Act (GAA) and that the BMB's allocations from the GAA for PWRCC has historically amounted to only P1-3M/year, we hope to work closely with BMB and DENR-MIMAROPA Region on appropriate strategies for additional funding and austerity measures to be implemented in PWRCC as early as January 2021.

We would like to express our appreciation for the continued assistance and support being extended by BMB and DENR-MIMAROPA Region to NRDC.

Thank you. Warm wishes on this holiday season.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) FRANCES VERONICA R. VICTORIO
President and CEO

cc: **Forester Eriberto B. Saños**
PENRO-Palawan

Forester Elegio C. Adelantar
OIC, Project Director, PWRCC



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SEP 17 2020

DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
No. 2020- 10

**SUBJECT : TRANSFER OF THE PALAWAN WILDLIFE RESCUE AND
CONSERVATION CENTER FROM THE BIODIVERSITY
MANAGEMENT BUREAU TO THE NATURAL
RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 786, dated 19 March 1982 (Creating the NRDC, Defining Its Functions, Powers and Responsibilities and For Other Purposes) and Executive Order No. 192, dated 10 June 1987 (An Act Providing for the Reorganization of the Department of Environment, Energy and Natural Resources, Renaming It as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and For Other Purposes) and in line with the need to streamline the supervision over the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center (PWRCC), generate higher revenues and pursue financial sustainability, the PWRCC is hereby transferred from the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) to the Natural Resources Development Corporation (NRDC). All documents, records, equipment, facilities, supplies and materials, concerned personnel except those holding permanent items in DENR-MIMAROPA Region, budget and all related matters are included in the transfer.

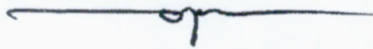
Within three (3) months from the effectivity of this Order, the NRDC, BMB and the DENR-MIMAROPA Region shall formulate and implement a smooth transition of the transfer and develop collaborative arrangements to strengthen the operations of the Center, to be contained in a Memorandum of Agreement. Within the transition period, the NRDC shall also develop a Business Plan for the Center, as well as identify new, innovative, competitive and related business ventures, with the objective of financial sustainability.

The NRDC is hereby authorized to update and fix prices, fees, charges and similar matters related to commercial and business operations, in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations.

The BMB shall continue to enforce its regulatory authorities over the crocodile and other wildlife species.

This Order revokes DAO No. 2010-27, dated 26 October 2010 (Transfer of PWRCC from the NRDC to the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau) and revokes and amends all other orders, memoranda, circulars and issuances which are inconsistent herewith.

This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in a newspaper of general circulation and upon acknowledgement of receipt of a copy thereof by the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR).


ROY A. CIMATU
Secretary

PUBLICATION: The Manila Times
November 10, 2020
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: U.P. Law Center
November 18, 2020



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