

ESTABLISHING THE GUIDELINES FOR ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the State to develop and promote sustainable tourism while enjoying the participation of the Filipino people in enhancing the growth and competitiveness of the Philippine economy;

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the state to ensure the sustainable use, development, management, protection and conservation of the country's environment and natural resources and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of the present and future generations;

WHEREAS, the development and promotion of ecotourism in the Philippines are viable and sustainable activities that will promote the protection of our environment while contributing at the same time to the growth of the economy;

WHEREAS, there is a need to establish an integrating system that shall warrant and focus government effort to sustain the viability of ecotourism development in the country; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) have issued a joint Memorandum Circular for the development of ecotourism in the Philippines.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH EJERCITO ESTRADA, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:

SECTION 1. National Ecotourism Development Council. There is hereby created a National Ecotourism Development Council (NEDC) to be composed of the secretaries of the following departments: Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, Interior and Local Government, Trade and Industry, Finance, National Economic and Development Authority, and Education, Culture and Sports and representatives from the private sector and non-government organizations. The Chairperson may invite other sectoral representatives in the NEDC. The NEDC, which shall serve as the policy-making body for ecotourism, shall be chaired by the Department of Tourism and co-chaired by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The NEDC shall have a National Ecotourism Steering Committee (NESC) and Regional Ecotourism Committees (REC) to effectively implement the programs and activities approved by the Council. The NESC shall have the following composition:



DOT Undersecretary for Planning	-	Chairperson
DENR Undersecretary for Environment	-	Co-chairperson
Director, DENR-Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau		
Director, DOT-Office of Tourism Development Planning		
Director, DOT-Office of Product Research and Development		
Director, DOT-Office of Tourism Standards		
Director, Department of Interior and Local Government		
Private Sector Representative/s		
Non-Government Organization/s		

The REC, on the other hand, shall be composed of the following:

Regional Director, DOT	-	Chairperson
Regional Executive Director, DENR	-	Co-Chairperson
Regional Technical Director for Environmental Management and Protected Area Sector (EMPAS), DENR NEDA-PCSD		
Private Sector Representative		
NGO Representative		
Concerned Local Government Unit Representative		

The Chairmanship of the Council and its committees shall have a term of three (3) years and shall be held on rotation basis by DOT and DENR.

SEC. 2. Functions and Responsibilities of the Ecotourism Committees.

he NESC shall be responsible for the following:

- a) Formulate and develop a national ecotourism strategy and program for the promotion and development of ecotourism in the country;
- b) Formulate and recommend policies, guidelines and programs relevant to the development and promotion of ecotourism in the country;
- c) Review, evaluate and approve major ecotourism project proposals;
- d) Devise an accreditation and incentives mechanism for ecotourism projects;
- e) Conduct consultation with the local population to be affected by ecotourism development to integrate their cultural values and beliefs in ecotourism plans and programs which may be formulated through their own initiative;
- f) Provide technical and financial assistance to communities which are included in the network of ecotourism sites to be established by the Council.



- g) Supervise and monitor the implementation of policies, guidelines ecotourism programs/ projects/ activities in the country; and
- h) Perform such other activities as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of the Order.

The REC shall have the following functions:

- a) Review, evaluate, approve and monitor ecotourism projects in their region;
- b) Implement policies, guidelines, programs, projects and activities formulated by the Council;
- c) Identify network of ecotourism sites in the region;
- d) Recommend plans and programs for ecotourism; and
- e) Perform such other activities as may be prescribed by the council.

SEC. 3. Secretariat Support. The NEDC shall establish an Ecotourism Technical Working Group to provide technical and administrative support to the NEDC and NESC in the implementation of the Order. The NEDC may also request the services and support of other government agencies necessary in the development and implementation of ecotourism programs in the country.

SEC. 4. Formulation of a National Ecotourism Strategy. A National Ecotourism Strategy shall be prepared by the Council to provide an integrated management plan which shall warrant a comprehensive direction for the future of ecotourism in the country by recognizing issues and problems for its sustainable development and recommend feasible approaches in addressing these issues. The Strategy shall be formulated in consultation with concerned stakeholders in the environment and tourism sectors including indigenous peoples and local communities to be affected by ecotourism development.

SEC. 5. National Ecotourism Program. To complement and support the aforementioned Strategy, a set of National Ecotourism Programs shall be developed. The program shall encompass the major aspects of ecotourism, which are: 1) development, management and protection of identified ecotourism sites; 2) product enhance and development; 3) environmental education and information campaign; 4) support programs for community stewardship and livelihood development.

SEC. 6. Operational Budget. The Department of Environment and National Resources (DENR) and Department of Tourism (DOT) shall allocate funds from their



