

TPB spotlight

A Quarterly e-Magazine of the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines

JANUARY - MARCH 2024



PHILIPPINES YIELDS 489 MILLION IN SALES LEADS AT ITB BERLIN, UP MORE THAN 50% FROM LAST YEAR

PHILIPPINES TRIUMPHS AT ASEAN TOURISM FORUM 2024, SECURES OVER PHP400 MILLION IN SALES LEADS

INDIAN MARKET EMBRACES PHILIPPINE TOURISM OFFERINGS AT OTM 2024 WITH 99.8M SALES LEADS

TAPPING INTO THE TATLER SPHERE: TPB TEAMS UP WITH TATLER PH TO PROMOTE THE ENHANCED TRAVEL PHILIPPINES APP

spotlight

Editor-in-Chief

MARIA MARGARITA MONTEMAYOR NOGRALES

Executive Editor

CHARLES AAMES M. BAUTISTA

Managing Editor

APRIL ROSE M. ENERIO

Creative Directors

MARIA NEDALIN L. MIRANDA

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PAULINE SARAH M. ABAYA

Writers:

MA. PATRICIA YULO

ROSE ANNE B. CRUZ

MA. JANELLE CRISHA S. CU

MA. CRISTINA Y. ABELITA

Section Editors

ATTY. VENANCIO C. MANUEL III

TERESITA DL. LANDAN

JANET W. CANOY

MARIVIC M. SEVILLA

ARNOLD T. GONZALES

Layout Artists

JAMESON B. CARANZA

SHIRLEY C. ESPADERO

LORENZ D. CABANOS

JEN MARIELLE R. BAWAR

Photographer

NARJAY R. CALINAO

SPOTLIGHT is a quarterly e-magazine of the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines spearheaded by its Marketing Communications Department.

If you are willing to contribute and share in the upcoming issues, please contact April Enerio april_enerio@tpb.gov.ph. Contributors will be acknowledged accordingly. *Articles are edited to suit length and style parameters.

TPBPHL
TOURISM PROMOTIONS BOARD PHILIPPINES

4F Legaspi Towers 300 Roxas Boulevard
Manila, Philippines 1004
Tel Nos: +63 2 85259318 to 27
Email: info@tpb.gov.ph
Website: www.tpb.gov.ph

[@philippines.tpb](https://www.facebook.com/philippines.tpb) [@philippines_tpb](https://www.instagram.com/philippines_tpb)

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On the Spot

Reflecting on the Philippine tourism scene in the first quarter of the year, one theme stands out: "Strong Beginnings."

Over the past three months, the Philippines has made its mark on the global tourism stage with notable presence and vigor. From the ASEAN Tourism Forum, ITB Berlin, boot Düsseldorf, Go Diving Show UK, to CMT Stuttgart and the Outbound Travel Mart in India, our nation has showcased its potential, resulting in over a billion in generated sales leads combined.

These accomplishments signify more than just figures; they embody the collective effort and commitment of our tourism industry. They underscore the vast opportunities awaiting exploration within our borders.

Yet, amidst these achievements, it's the stories of community-driven initiatives and sustainability efforts that resonate deeply. Take, for instance, the women-led clean-up in Sipalay, which received global recognition in Berlin. Such endeavors demonstrate the power of collaboration and highlight our commitment to responsible tourism.

It's these kinds of stories that remind me why strong beginnings matter. I invite you to read these stories, and as you turn the pages, let them inspire you with how our collective action can show the world the many reasons to love the Philippines.

Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles
Chief Operating Officer
Tourism Promotions Board Philippines





Philippines Yields 489 Million in Sales Leads at ITB Berlin, Up More than 50% from Last Year

The Philippines wrapped up Internationale Tourismus-Börse (ITB) Berlin 2024, known as the world's largest travel trade fair, with a 322 sales lead count and a projected revenue of 489,129,353.80 Million Pesos after three days of business-to-business appointments with tourism players from various parts of Europe. The feat marks a big leap of over 50% from last year's negotiated sales revenue which was at 271.5 Million Pesos.

The delegation, led by the Department of Tourism and Tourism Promotions Board Philippines with the participation of close to 60 delegates composed of destination management companies and tour operators including ANNSET Holidays, Inc, Blue Horizons Travel & Tours, Inc., Baron Travel Corporation, Biyaheko.ph, Earth Explorers Travel and Tours, Intas Destinations Management Inc, Kapwa Travel and Tours Inc., Marsman Drysdale Travel, Inc., Rajah Tours Philippines, Sarah Lea Travel and Tours, Inc., Southeast Travel Corporation, Travel Warehouse, Inc, Travelite DMC Philippines, and U-Travel Services, Inc; hotel and resort enterprises such as Amorita Resort, The Bellevue Resort, Bohol Beach Club, El Nido Resorts, Fili Hotel - NUSTAR Resort Cebu, Lihim Resorts, The Funny Lion, The Lind Boracay, Megaworld Hotels and Resorts, Modala Beach Resort, Plantation Bay Resort and Spa; and other government agencies such as Philippine Retirement Authority, Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority, and the Provinces of Bohol and Camiguin, promoted a variety of Philippine products and experiences including award-winning destinations from the three island groups of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.



"The Philippines' success at ITB Berlin reflects the shared tourism governance between the government and the private sector whose direction and dedication is firmly towards expanding tourism development and promotions for our award-winning and emerging destinations. By highlighting our country's strengths and natural beauty, introducing the depth and breadth of our history, heritage, and culture, and introducing unique and meaningful Philippine Experiences across our Regions, the Philippines promises unforgettable journeys made even more memorable by the love and warmth of the Filipino people. We are grateful for the overwhelmingly positive global response to our country's sustainable tourism efforts, and we are committed to ensuring that the world will continue to Love the Philippines," said DOT Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco.

Aside from the tabletop appointments of Philippine sellers, various activations such as fitting of traditional Filipino costumes by fashion designer Avel Bacudio and the native instruments showcase by the Kalumon Performing Ensemble were conducted to attract visitors to the Philippine pavilion. Filipino food with a twist was also served by Chef Bulawan Callanta, the owner of AYAN - Filipino Streetfood Berlin, as well as drinks concocted by flair bartender champion, Dennis Barrela Adiuba.

"I am incredibly proud of our Philippine sellers who exceeded all expectations. It is an absolute privilege to be a part of such a dedicated and talented delegation. The enthusiasm and performances showcased during the event mirror the outstanding experience one can expect when visiting the Philippines - distinct, captivating, and unforgettable," expressed TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles.

The Philippines also scored big at the Green Destinations Story Awards with Poblacion Beach of Sipalay City, Negros Occidental winning second place in the "Thriving Communities" category alongside Kazakhstan's Katon Kagarai taking third and Brazil's Tibau Do Sul in first. The ceremony was held on the second day of ITB Berlin with Sipalay Mayor Maria Gina Lizares, Negros Occidental's 6th District Representative Mercedes Alvarez-Lansang, and City Tourism Officer Jerick Lacson on hand to receive the award.

"Sipalay City's transformation into a thriving natural seaside habitat for sea turtles and mangroves is truly inspiring," stated COO Nograles.

"While we value the economic benefits of tourism, it is crucial to prioritize sustainable initiatives," continued Nograles. "We must ensure that our actions today benefit not only our economy, but also our environment."

This year's ITB Berlin saw an increase in visitors with almost 100,000 participants, including 5500 exhibitors from 170 countries, filling the halls of event venue Messe Berlin. The Philippines targets to participate again in next year's installment which is set to take place on 4-6 March 2025.



PHILIPPINES CRUISES THROUGH BOOT DÜSSELDORF WITH PHP 168M IN SALES

The Philippine contingent to the Düsseldorf International Boat Show 2024, also known as boot Düsseldorf, rounded off the 9-day maritime trade fair with a reported revenue of PHP 168,187,455 Million, significantly surpassing its previous year sales efforts by nearly PHP 50 Million.

Led by the Tourism Promotions Board and with the participation of 16 private sector properties and outfitters, the Philippine team successfully managed to increase its sales leads and onsite bookings while also promoting some of the country's known dive destinations including the UNESCO World Heritage Site that is the Tubbataha Reef, and those in the provinces of Batangas, Mindoro, Palawan, Cebu, Negros Oriental and Occidental, Bohol, and Southern Leyte.

Apart from showcasing products and services tailored for the diving community, the Philippine team utilized a space of 84 square meters to mount its island pavilion designed with striking underwater photography that seamlessly blended with the vibrant Love the Philippines slogan.

Promotional materials were also on hand at the Philippine pavilion, including pocket guides, brochures and dive maps. Additionally, dried mangoes, green peas and peanut snacks and chocolates from Davao did their share in attracting more customers to the stand.

To further establish and sustain the archipelago as a powerhouse for underwater activities, dive presentations by Ram Yoro, a renowned underwater photographer and author of Guide to Anilao, were conducted at the main stages of Halls 12 (Dive) and 13 (Destinations).

"Boot Düsseldorf is known to attract people from all over the world and we see it as an opportunity for the Philippines to showcase our marine biodiversity given our strategic location in the Coral Triangle," said TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles. "But more than that, we also see this as a venue to broadcast to the world how diverse we are in serving the needs of the dive community not only as underwater enthusiasts but also as travelers, because beyond our waters, we have beautiful islands waiting to be discovered and experienced."

This year's boot installment saw the return of Philippine properties and outfitters including Amun Ini Beach Resort & Spa, Atlantis Dive Resorts & Liveaboards, Atmosphere Resorts & Spa, Blue Lagoon Dive Resort, Buceo Anilao Beach & Dive Resort, Dive Society Dauin, Dugong Dive Center, Easy Diving and Beach Resort, Infiniti Liveaboard, Magic Resorts Philippines, Peter's Dive Resort, and Salaya Beach Houses.

The contingent also welcomed new participants such as Asia Divers & El Galleon Dive Resort, Silver Reef Dive Resort, Sunset Dive Resort, and Sea Explorers Philippines.

Aside from the Philippine delegation, there were eight other global brands and consolidators whose partnership with Philippine stakeholders expanded the country's presence in the dive show. These companies were Master Liveaboards, Beluga Reisen, GTS Reisebüro, Wiro Dive, Absolut Scuba, Tauchen – Rogers Tours, and Scuba Native.



"In my first participation as part of the Philippine delegation, we observed a notable increase in turnout, indicating a promising growth for dive tourism, surpassing last year's numbers," said Mr. Kai Wiekenberg, Director of Sunset Dive Resort.

The 2024 boot Düsseldorf recorded 214,000 visitors from 120 countries. The next event is scheduled on 18 to 26 January 2025.



PHILIPPINES TRIUMPHS AT ASEAN TOURISM FORUM 2024, SECURES OVER PHP 400 MILLION IN SALES LEADS

The ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2024 concluded on a high note for the Philippines, with the country yielding over 400 million Philippine pesos in negotiated sales leads during the three-day business-to-business sessions in Vientiane, Laos on January 24 to 26, 2024.

The Philippine delegation, led by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, was represented by 15 local exhibitors from the airline industry, hotels and resorts, tour operators/ destination management companies, and convention center to network and engage with 79 international buyers.

“The impressive turnout of the Philippine delegation at the business-to-business sessions exceeded our expectations and reflects the strong interest in the Philippines’ diverse tourism offerings. The fruitful interactions between our local stakeholders and international buyers have strengthened existing partnerships and paved the way for new collaborations. We look forward to bearing its remarkable fruits this year,” said TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles.

The Philippine pavilion showcased the country’s award-winning destinations including Intramuros, Palawan, and Cebu alongside a captivating display of the T’boli people’s rich cultural heritage through traditional patterns from the t’nalak weave. Booth visitors also enjoyed a cup of Antipolo, Rizal’s famed Kaulayaw Coffee.

TPB and DOT also hosted a special function at the Grand Ballroom of Landmark Mekong Riverside Hotel to introduce Philippine cuisine and culture

to the global stage, and to announce the country’s hosting of the 36th Joint Meeting of the United Nation (UN) Tourism Commission for East Asia and the Pacific & the UN Tourism Commission for South Asia (36th CAP-CSA) and 1st UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Asia and the Pacific in Cebu in June.

The event brought together delegates from different National Tourism Organizations, Philippine tourism stakeholders, international buyers, and media for a taste of curated flavors of Filipino cuisine by Chef Don Baldosano of Linannam restaurant and to enjoy a variety of cultural performances by homegrown talents.

Destileria Limtuaco & Co. Inc., the Philippines’ oldest distillery, proudly sponsored the late-night function, delighting attendees with a selection of signature beverages such as Paradise Mango Rum, Manille Liqueur De Dalandan, Manille Liqueur De Calamansi, Intramuros Liqueur De Cacao, and Amadeo Coffee Liqueur.

Meanwhile, the Philippines earned distinction at the ASEAN Tourism Awards, a prestigious recognition program that honors excellence in tourism businesses and destinations within the ASEAN region.

Palawan-based property Daluyon Beach and Mountain Resort was named lead partner for “Enchanting Gastronomical Sabang Delights, Beach Forest and Caves”

under the ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Awards.

Awardees for ASEAN Clean Tourist City included the cities of Baguio in Benguet, Ilagan, Isabela and Tabuk, Kalinga.

Prime properties Pearl Farm Beach Resort, Club Paradise Palawan, Bohol Beach Club, Seda Nuvali, and The Forest Lodge at Camp John Hay were recognized as among the best in the ASEAN Green Hotel Award.

Moreover, the ASEAN Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition (MICE) Venue Awards recognized the work of 15 Philippine venues for their high-quality facilities and outstanding work performance. The awards were divided into three categories: meeting room, exhibition hall venue, and event venue category.

The awardees for the meeting room category were Bai Hotel Cebu, Clark Marriott Hotel, Hilton Clark Sun Valley Resort, Princesa Garden Island Resort & Spa, and Seda Hotel Nuvali.

World Trade Center Metro Manila (Manila Exposition Complex), SMX Convention Center Manila, Cordillera Convention Hall by Baguio Country Club, Isabela Convention Center (ICON), and Iloilo Convention Center bagged the ASEAN MICE Venue Award for the exhibition hall category.

And the awardees for the ASEAN Mice Venue Award for the event venue category were Palacio del Sur by Marcian Group, Jpark Island Resort & Waterpark Cebu, Infinity Garden by Baguio Country Club, CAP-John Hay Trade and Cultural Center, and Princesa Garden Island Resort and Spa by Modern Asia, Inc.



Indian Market Embraces Philippine Tourism Offerings at OTM 2024 with PHP99.8M sales leads

The Philippines stood out as a Featured Country at the Outbound Travel Market (OTM) 2024 event held at Mumbai’s Jio World Convention Center last 8-10 February 2024. The country’s participation generated PHP 99.8M in sales leads, underscoring its huge appeal to Indian travelers who are one of the world’s top three fastest-growing outbound travel markets.

OTM, Asia’s largest travel trade show and India’s primary travel market gateway, attracted over 40,000 industry professionals and 1,600 exhibitors from 60 countries and 30 Indian States and Union Territories, reaffirming its status as a premier tourism event in the Asia-Pacific region. The event served as a vital networking platform for pre-qualified professionals in various sectors including travel agents, tour operators, MICE & corporate buyers, wedding planners, and media producers.

The Philippine Pavilion, organized by the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, buzzed with foot traffic, networking, and other activities during the fair. On February 8, a Philippine Networking Night was conducted, drawing a diverse and enthusiastic audience of Indian and foreign business executives, tour and travel operators, and travel enthusiasts reflecting the growing interest towards the Philippines among Indians.

Leading the said event was Department of Tourism (DOT) Undersecretary for Tourism Regulation, Coordination and

Resource Generation, Shalimar Hofer Tamano, who greeted the participants with inspiring remarks. The hosted night featured a captivating cultural fusion performance and raffle draws. Ms. Marivic M. Sevilla, TPB’s Acting Head of the International Promotions Department closed the event with gratitude and anticipation for the future of tourism partnerships.

The Philippine delegation included representatives of the DOT CALABARZON and Central Visayas, and tourism establishments Biyaheko.ph, Cicerone Travel & Events, GMR Megawide Cebu Airport Corporation, Lalaguna Villas Luxury Dive Resort and Spa, New World Makati Hotel, Novotel Manila Araneta City (Araneta Hotels Inc), Rajah Travel Corporation, Shroff International Travel Care Inc, Tambuli Seaside Resort and Spa, Tiger Resort Leisure & Entertainment Inc. (Okada Manila), and Waterfront Hotels and Casinos.

The Philippines previously participated in OTM 2019, bringing four private sectors generating 440 sales leads and bagging awards such as the “Best Tourism Board” and “Best Booth Design.” The delegation also embarked on a sales mission to Ahmedabad and Kolkata.

The next edition of the OTM is happening on 30 January to 01 February 2025 in Mumbai, which is considered India’s largest source market for Business, MICE, leisure, and luxury travel.

Philippine dive tourism shines at GO DIVING SHOW UK with PHP32M sales leads

The Philippines successfully showcased its breathtaking underwater wonders at the GO Diving Show held at NAEC, Stoneleigh in the UK on 2-3 March 2024. The event generated an estimated revenue of over PHP32 million, a significant success for the Philippine dive tourism industry.

The GO Diving Show, UK's largest dive travel trade and consumer fair, united top independent dive travel brands, tour operators, and tourist boards worldwide. From exhibitions featuring cutting-edge diving equipment to insights into exotic diving destinations, the show catered to every facet of scuba diving, blending the thrill of underwater adventure with the latest advancements in diving technology.

Moreover, the addition of new halls and a diverse speaker lineup across five stages, including the main stage, inspiration stage, UK stage, tech stage, and photo stage, provided invaluable insights and experiences for diving enthusiasts of all skill levels.

Seven premier dive establishments from the Philippines participated in this year's edition, including Scandinavian Divers Inc., Magic Resorts Philippines, Atlantis Dive Resorts, Atmosphere Resorts and Spa, Evolution, Buceo Anilao, and Philippine Dive Holidays Ltd. These dive pioneers showcased an array of dive attractions and packages, enticing over 5,000 event visitors with the promise of unforgettable underwater adventures in the Philippines.

The remarkable accomplishment of the Philippines at the GO Diving Show not only underscores the growth potential of the Philippine dive scene but also augurs well for the future of diving tourism worldwide. Overall, the Philippines' participation in the GO Diving Show 2024 solidifies its status as a premier dive destination and sets the stage for further exploration and discovery beneath the waves.



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TPB AND DOT ELEVATE PHILIPPINE TOURISM PRESENCE IN THE GERMAN MARKET

The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines and the Philippine Department of Tourism (PDOT) Frankfurt showcased the Philippines' finest tourism attractions at the Caravan, Motor, and Tourism (CMT) fair at Messe Stuttgart from 13 to 21 January 2024.

The Philippine pavilion featured a vibrant showcase of the distinct Filipino identity. Visitors were treated to a journey through the archipelago's breathtaking landscapes, cultural and gastronomic heritage, and adventure-filled experiences.

Organized by Landesmesse Stuttgart, CMT lived up to its reputation as the world's largest public fair for tourism and leisure, welcoming around 234,000 visitors. Of these, about 11,700 attendees visited the Philippine booth.

The TPB, PDOT Frankfurt, and six (6) Germany-based seller companies composed of general leisure and dive companies generated PHP 29,665,139.00 in negotiated sales leads, with PHP7,628,178.60 translating into actual bookings.



This year, the Philippines was chosen as the official partner for CMT, presenting an even greater opportunity to elevate the country's promotional efforts. The Philippine stand was strategically positioned near the entrance, ensuring high visibility as visitors entered the hall.

Dakila Gonzales, the tourism attaché of PDOT Frankfurt, underscored that the large number of presentation areas made it possible for the Philippines to turn its tourism slogan "Love the Philippines" into a real experience.



A highlight of the pavilion was the immersive experience where visitors had the opportunity to interact with Filipino artisans and performers. The Sindaw Philippines Performing Arts Guild, a known folkloric dance group, welcomed guests with energetic traditional dance shows. Adding to the lively atmosphere was a captivating bartending performance with complimentary tastings of local rum.

For the foodies, a food truck stationed at the back of the pavilion dished up authentic Filipino favorites like adobo, pansit, and lumpia. Visitors also savored coffee samples from Bukidnon and Lanao del Norte, alongside iconic Philippine snacks like pili nuts, banana, coconut, pineapple, and dragon fruit chips.

The Philippines looks forward to welcoming an increasing number of German visitors in the future following its successful participation in CMT. This endeavor fostered deeper connections between the German travel trade and Philippine stakeholders.



Tapping into the Tatler Sphere

TPB teams up with Tatler Philippines to promote the enhanced Travel Philippines app

Since launching the enhanced Travel Philippines app in October of 2023, the Tourism Promotions Board has been organizing pocket events to further the app's reach.

From gathering top technology firm honchos to hosting key opinion leaders and celebrities, the agency, under the leadership of Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles, its Chief Operating Officer, is keen on making Travel Philippines a household name. And what better way to do this than organizing events and inviting attendees with high media mileage?

Because third time's a charm, the TPB organized its third pocket event that took place just two weeks after the new year - January 16 to be exact – and partnered with luxury lifestyle magazine Tatler Philippines to reach the publication's sphere of influencers.

The TPBxTatler pocket event, hosted by Issa Litton and graced by the presence of COO Nograles and Tatler's managing director Irene Martel-Francisco, was held at Samba at Shangri-La The Fort where big names from the Tatler roster including Vicki Belo, Tim Yap, Stephanie Zubiri, Kelly Misa, Rissa Mananquil-Trillo, A. A. Patawaran, and many others were in attendance.

Aptly called, "Travel Essential - Experience the Philippines", the event not only underscored Travel Philippines as a handy companion to discovering the country but also became a call to action for users to become Philippine tourism ambassadors.

"Each and every one of you here has a special story to share about our hometown. Let us continue to share those stories - what is most special about this beautiful home of ours," said COO Nograles in her message to the event attendees. "As we go into the tech of things, we will also bring out the power and the heart of the Filipino."

With the Travel Philippines app appearing on the mobile screens of the attendees amid the clanking of glasses and the tasty hors d'oeuvres, some searched for their favorite Philippine destinations while others were quizzed by Litton using some of the app's features.

COO Nograles emphasized, however, that what they held in their hands was a result of the first phase of improvements and TPB has bigger plans for the app. Though these plans have yet to be revealed, launching the enhanced app marked the first step taken by the TPB and its mother agency, the Department of Tourism, in this era of the Internet of Things in which they have to be poised for action.

As the tourism sector and its consumers evolve, adapting to the changes and addressing needs is necessary. And with the advent of the enhanced Travel Philippines app through the TPB and the DOT, it seems that the country is on the right path as it readies itself to face the demands of digitalization.

TPB LAUNCHES ENHANCED MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM



Looking to expand and bring more opportunities to tourism stakeholders, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) launched its enhanced TPB Membership Program at Luxent Hotel on 12 March 2024.

The event was graced by Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco and other officials including Undersecretary Shahlimar Hofer Tamano, Undersecretary Ferdinand Jumapao, Assistant Secretary Rica Bueno, Assistant Secretary Verna Buensuceso, and TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles.

Civil Service Commission (CSC) Chairperson Karlo Nograles, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Undersecretary Cristina Roque, Department of Transportation (DOTr) Undersecretary Roberto Lim, and Director Eduardo Pelaez were also present to show their support. Furthermore, around 350 representatives from various tourism enterprises attended the launch.

The program's aim is to strengthen the partnership between the TPB and its members by enabling the latter to prosper in the digital age and learn how to leverage market intelligence through a series of modules.

Members will also be included in the Travel Philippines' app directory, making it easier for travelers to reach them for planning dream vacations. Apart from the directory inclusion, members can advertise their promos to tap into a wider audience now that the number of Travel Philippines app users is steadily increasing.

Secretary Frasco gave a keynote at the event to show her support. She emphasized that the enhanced program and the inclusion of TPB members in the Travel Philippines app is a significant

milestone for the tourism industry as it increases the connection between tourists and local tourism enterprises.

"The app gives new markets and existing markets access to information about TPB members. In other words, wherever you may be in the world, you can simply open your phone and access information that directly links tourists to your companies," the Secretary said.

"In my short time with the TPB, I've seen that you are truly the core of our tourism industry. There's so much potential for us to transform the Philippines into a global tourism leader, and this vision is only achievable through our collective effort," COO Nograles said as she addressed the stakeholders at the event.

The members' inclusion in the Travel Philippines app and the special access to market intelligence are just two of the many benefits that enterprises can enjoy from TPB's Enhanced Membership Program. TPB also offers networking and capacity-building, access to information and promotional materials, assistance for brand enhancement, and business opportunities for its program members.

The TPB Membership Program was conceptualized following Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as the Tourism Act of 2009, that allows the agency to be open for membership to entities, groups and individuals with economic, social or cultural interest in travel trade, congresses and conventions.

Year 2023 ended with TPB having a total of 859 members from all over the country.

For more information, visit <https://membership.tpb.gov.ph/>



TPB Brings Philippine Destinations Within People's Reach During the 31ST TRAVEL TOUR EXPO



The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines joined the 31st Travel Tour Expo (TTE) at the SMX Convention Center in Pasay City last 2-4 February 2024. With the theme “The World Within Reach”, the expo served as a one-stop-shop for consumers who want to travel to both local and international destinations.

Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco, Department of Transportation (DOTr) Secretary Jaime Bautista, TPB COO Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles, TTE 2024 Chairperson Ma. Patricia Chiong, Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA) President Evangeline Tankiang Manotok, and Hon. Joey Calixto Isidro of Pasay City formally opened the event through a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Secretary Frasco expressed the importance of events like TTE in sustaining tourism efforts in the country. She acknowledged the PTAA’s efforts to unite the Philippine tourism industry and promote various travel products through the TTE for the past three decades. Secretary Frasco also recognized the importance of travel expos in championing local destinations in an equal manner.

“To take a continuous whole-of-nation and whole-of-government approach, it is essential for us to deliberately capitalize on our strengths and competitive advantage even as we explore the unexplored, giving opportunities for emerging and lesser-known destinations to be promoted, developed, and highlighted in our tourism portfolio,” said Secretary Frasco.

TPB aligned with DOT during the event by promoting both popular and lesser-known destinations in the Philippine Pavilion that featured stunning images of tourist attractions in Negros Occidental, Kalinga, Iloilo City, Romblon, and more.

The Philippine booth also showcased interactive displays, allowing people to learn more about the Philippines through the Travel PH app, and became a venue for consumers to take part in educational games and win prizes.

Moreover, the Bisita Be My Guest program was promoted for OFWs or Filipinos living abroad to get incentives for inviting foreigners to visit the Philippines.

By the end of the three-day event, TPB’s booth was given the Most Unique Booth award for its dynamic and interactive features.



SIPALAY’S WOMEN-LED CLEAN-UP INITIATIVE WINS GLOBAL TOURISM ACCOLADE

Women and sustainability combined are a force to be reckoned with. Indeed, this pairing is what led Poblacion Beach in Sipalay City to win second place in the “Thriving Communities” category of the Green Destinations Top 100 Story Awards at the Internationale Tourismus-Börse (ITB) in Berlin, Germany.

Sipalay is a city in the province of Negros Occidental in the Visayas islands located in Central Philippines. As a former mining community, the city faced environmental issues until it ended mining in 2001. The city then turned to tourism given its numerous beaches that cater to water activities, including diving. One of its beaches is Poblacion, located in the city center.

With the urban area surrounding Poblacion, the beach became a dump site for household and human waste as well as debris piling up storm after storm. But in the year 2000, the Sipalay City Council for Women partnered with the Sipalay City Government to create the “Lakbayon Project” to address the issue.

“Lakbayon” is a portmanteau of “Lakbay sa Baybayon” which means walk along the beach. The project encouraged its members composed of housewives of fishermen, single mothers, teenagers, and abled senior citizens to take that morning exercise walk along Poblacion Beach while picking up trash.

The volunteer project eventually led to a cleaner beach with 40% of it becoming a conservation area for sea turtles and 11 hectares allowing for a mangrove and beach forest to thrive.

“Lakbayon” after 23 years continues to this day and because of it, Poblacion Beach is now considered as one of Sipalay’s main tourist attractions and a favorite venue for tourism activities, including the hosting of national-level sports tourism events.

The global recognition of Sipalay City is a beacon for other communities, “We hope to inspire, to help, to share Sipalay’s best practices with other communities so that there will be more green destinations and that sustainable tourism will be inscribed in the DNA of localities,” said Negros Occidental 6th District Representative Mercedes Alvarez.

The Green Destination Top 100 Story Awards recognizes destinations around the world with the most inspiring initiatives for sustainable tourism development in six categories: Destination Management, Nature & Scenery, Environment & Climate, Culture & Tradition, Thriving Communities, and Business & Marketing.

Sipalay was the only entry from the Philippines to reach the top three in any of the six categories this year.



TPB Journeys to Palau Island for its CSR Program

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program and Tourism Marketing Educational Seminar program, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines visited Palau Island on 17-19 January 2024 to extend assistance to the island's tourism officials, students, and local community.



Palau residents enjoyed a filling meal through the soup kitchen that TPB organized

The CSR program commenced with the distribution of 260 school kits, allowing the students of Palau Integrated School and PAG-ASACA School to get new school supplies, raincoats, bucket hats, and slippers. The organization also organized a soup kitchen for the children, giving the students a chance to have a hearty meal consisting of chicken soup, boiled eggs, pancit canton, fried chicken, and orange juice.

Aside from helping the youth, the TPB uplifted the local tourism industry of Palau Island by providing 52 roof covers for tourist boats upon learning that tarpaulins, old towels, or blankets are being used as makeshift roofs, especially after Typhoon "Goring" hit the community and destroyed several roof covers. In addition, 52 heavy-duty solar lamps were distributed for the boatmen to properly fish during their nighttime deployments; and tote bags containing dri-fit long-sleeved shirts, bucket hats, and slippers were given to the local members of the Palau-San Vicente Tourist Motor Boat Association and the Sta. Ana Motorized Boat Association.



Tourist boatmen from Palau received roof covers from TPB

"It is important that, as an organization, TPB employees and its management are exposed to programs that serve the communities we promote as tourism destinations. Empathy is of utmost importance in public service, and we are proud that TPB embraces this value with authenticity and commitment. We look forward to supporting more communities and helping them thrive to become recognized destinations of choice in the future," shared TPB COO Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles.



TPB distributed school supplies to the students of Palau Integrated School

TPB's CSR program is held at least once a year, in pursuit of green and sustainable tourism, as well as providing support to communities all over the Philippines to become stronger tourism destinations. The program also provides assistance to various tourism-related entities to ensure stable livelihood for locals while preserving culture and heritage.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR M.I.C.E. TPB'S PARTICIPATES IN THE PROFESSIONAL CONVENTION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (PCMA) 2024



AI and stress how quickly technology would affect human civilization. Gawdat and Schick's main lesson was that while AI won't steal your job, someone who utilizes AI to do job duties would.

The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines' COO Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles, Acting Division Chief Sales and Accounts Management Division M.I.C.E Department Ms. Raquel Ruth A. Tria-Joya, and Acting Division Chief Events Marketing and Services Division M.I.C.E. Department Mr. Milo Oropeza met Sheriff Karamat, CAE, the President and CEO of PCMA, as a result of their participation in the event.

"I am hopeful that the number of Philippine MICE players will rise because the Philippines will be represented at the upcoming PCMA Business of Events in April 2024. I am confident that TPB and PCMA will establish a strong partnership in further promoting the MICE industry", said TPB COO Nograles.

TPB understands the significance of a connection being formed with PCMA. Together with this year's PCMA Convening Leaders event, TPB will be a part of the PCMA APAC Business of Events in April 2024. This provides TPB a great leverage to learn from each other and form meaningful connections in the PCMA community.

The 2024 Convening Leaders of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), held at the San Diego Convention Center on January 7-10, 2024, drew 5,000 industry leaders in person and online for educational talks, networking opportunities, and insightful programs.

This year's event, with the theme of "Think Bigger," gathered more than 125 presenters and over 45 learning experiences that challenged professionals to be bolder, to dream big, and to reflect deeply on the next generation of business events.

Important subjects for event planners were covered at the conference, such as innovation and technology, event design and planning, accessibility and DEI, and marketing and sales.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) was also a hot subject as author and former Google X CBO Mo Gawdat spoke on the rapidly advancing and pervasive technology. To stay on top of their game, he advised CEOs to pinpoint their areas of strength and figure out how to apply AI to their knowledge in those areas. Subsequently, AI expert Nina Schick took the stage to go into additional details about



DIVE TOURISM CONTRIBUTES P73 BILLION TO PH ECONOMY IN 2023: FRASCO

The Department of Tourism (DOT) reaffirmed its commitment towards sustainable tourism development initiatives in the Philippines, particularly in the development and promotion of the country's dive tourism.

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco made the statement during the opening ceremony of the Philippine International Dive Expo (PHIDEX) 2024 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila (WTCMM).

"As one of the megabiodiverse countries in the world, we are home to more than 500 species of corals and 2,000 species of fish. Therefore, this distinction for the Philippines we take to heart with a firm commitment to ensure not just the marketability, but more importantly, the sustainability of our dive industry," Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco said, noting that in 2023, dive tourism contributed more than P73 billion to the country's economy, or almost twice the P37 billion revenue generated from the industry in 2022.

"United under the guidance and visionary leadership of our President, we can look forward to yielding additional revenue from this industry, reinforcing the Philippine position as the World's Premier Dive Destination and tourism's role, as now one of the strongest pillars of our economy, providing livelihood and employment for millions of Filipinos," she enthused.

In his message delivered by the Tourism Secretary, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. cited the private sector's pivotal role in the government's sustainable tourism development initiatives, as he wished success on the three-day expo.

"We cannot emphasize enough the importance of the private sector participation in ensuring that the Philippines remains a premier destination for diving enthusiasts and professionals from around the globe. Through strategic investments in infrastructure and sustainable tourism initiatives, the government will continue to elevate our country's standing as a hotspot of biodiversity and underwater adventure," the President added.

Fully cognizant of the prospects of dive tourism, the DOT through the leadership of Secretary Frasco has proactively led interventions to further develop and promote the sector.

In addition to organizing the PHIDEX, the DOT introduced various dive festivals and programs in several regions across the country in support of dive tourism, including the successful inaugural Philippine Tourism Dive Dialogue (PTDD) last September 2023 in Cebu.

"We have also expanded our dive tourism offerings to emerging and lesser-known destinations, bringing our total to approximately 120 dive destinations across the Philippines today," Secretary Frasco added.



Further, to prioritize a safe and enjoyable experience for divers, the DOT through its Dive Committee and infrastructure arm, the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), has committed to providing additional hyperbaric chambers in strategic locations across the country, including Boracay Island, Camiguin, Daanbantayan in Cebu, Dumaguete, and Puerto Galera.

Addressing guests and participants during the opening ceremony, Secretary Frasco thanked industry partners for helping shape the country's dive tourism industry.

"I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our exhibit partner, Underwater 360, organizer of ADEX, and to all the participants, our fellow ocean lovers, dive enthusiasts, exhibitors, speakers, and buyers. Your shared love and dedication to advancing the Philippine diving industry has helped shape this groundbreaking event," she said.

The opening day of PHIDEX 2024 saw the attendance and support of several distinguished guests, including Ambassador of Malaysia to the Philippines His Excellency (H.E) Dato Abdul Malik Melvin Castelino; Ambassador of Thailand to the Philippines H.E Tull Traisorat; Deputy Speaker Duke Frasco; Eastern Samar Governor Ben P. Evardone; Batangas District Representative Gerville "Jinky" Luistro; and Mr. John Thet, Chief Executive Officer of ADEX, who led the ribbon cutting rites with Secretary Frasco.

In fostering a public-private approach to protecting the environment and promoting the country's economic growth through tourism, the Department entered into a Memorandum

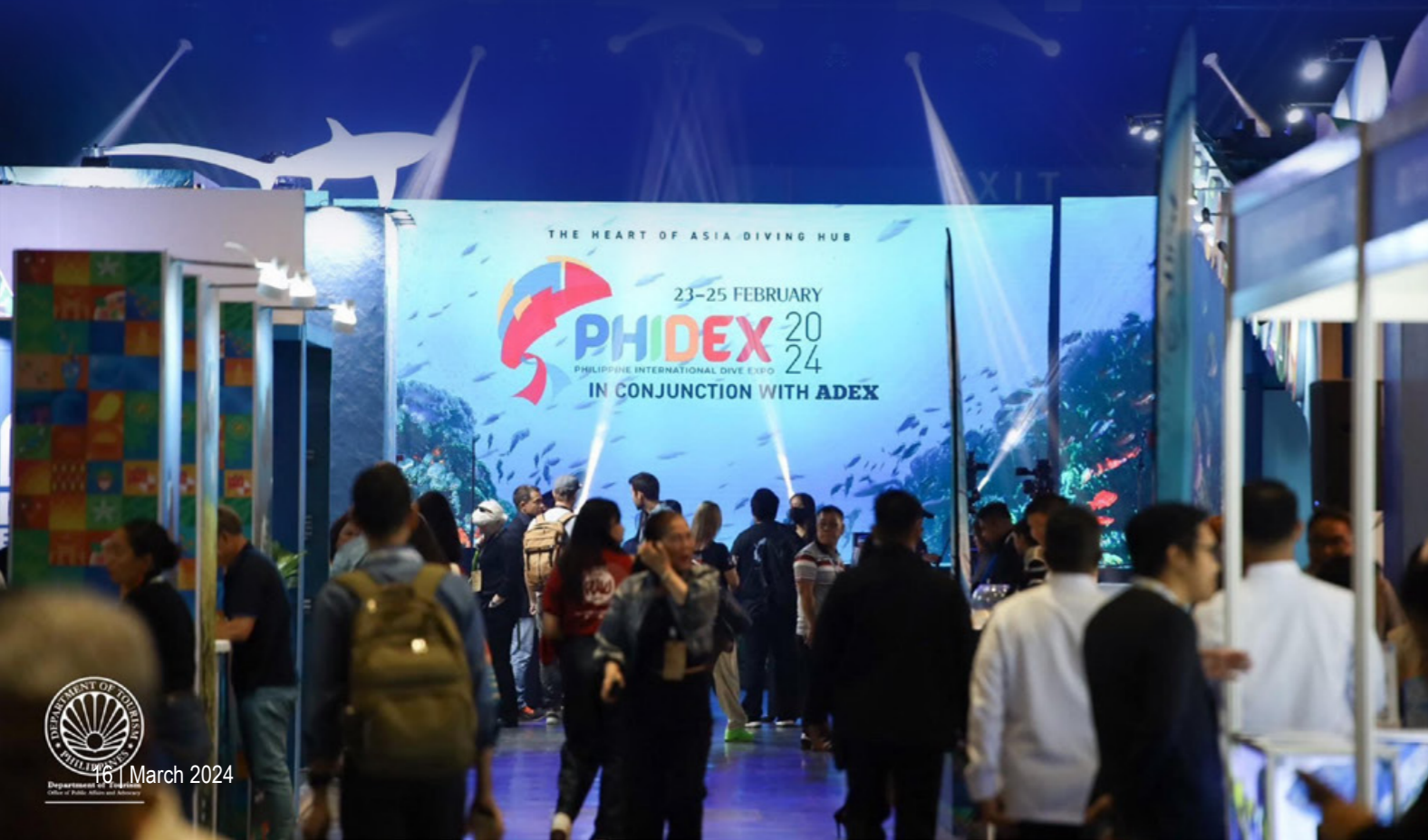
of Agreement (MOA) with the Asian Conservation Foundation Inc., Blue Alliance Philippines, and Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute.

Signed between Secretary Frasco and the leaders of non-government organizations (NGOs) and witnessed by Undersecretary Shahlimar Hofer Tamano and OIC-Undersecretary Verna Buensuceso, the agreement covers areas of collaboration between the DOT and the NGOs, including the development of programs for environmental sustainability; conduct joint activities for marine environmental protection and conservation; support and participation in the parties' promotional events and marketing activities; and designation of a focal person or specific office to handle smooth coordination on all matters arising from the agreement.

For three days, PHIDEX 2024 offered expansive networking prospects for dive decision-makers, communities, and individuals through value-added components, including the Dive Travel Exchange (TRAVEX) business-to-business meetings, Dive Conference, and Dive Exhibit featuring the country's best dive offerings.

DOT also hosted post-PHIDEX familiarization tours for international dive operators and invited media to showcase the country's richness in world-class diving sites and experiences.

Source: Department of Tourism



DOT awards brand new two-bedroom SMDC condo to Fil-Canadian winner of Bisita, Be My Guest Program

Manila, Philippines—The Department of Tourism (DOT) led by Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco and SM Development Corporation (SMDC) President Jose Mari J. Banzon on February 13 formally awarded a brand new

condominium unit courtesy of SM Development Corporation (SMDC) Quezon City to one lucky winner of the Bisita, Be My Guest (BBMG) incentive program. Mr. Ruperto Tumibay, a seventy-nine-year-old who hails from Nueva Ecija and a Filipino-Canadian citizen since 2008, was proclaimed winner of the SMDC condominium during the BBMG special raffle draw held in October last year.

Officials who also joined the awarding ceremony at the DOT Central Office in Makati City were SMDC Vice President for Marketing Aye Luna Magtulis, SM Supermalls Vice President for Corporate Marketing and Public Relations Grace Magno, and other officials of the Department.

Tumibay, who registered as sponsor for his son and invitee Alex Tumibay, won a two-bedroom brand new condominium unit courtesy of SMDC Vine Residences in Novaliches, Quezon, with a total area of 29.65 sqm.

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“Masayang masaya ako dahil hindi ko inaasahan na ako ay makakapagsalita sa harap ninyo, sa harap ni Secretary Frasco. Sasamantalain ko ang pagkakataong ito para magpasalamat sainyo, Secretary Frasco, sa mga officials ng SMDC na naririto, at sa lahat sainyo dahil sa edad na ito, hindi ko inaasahang makakakasama ko mataas na pinuno ng gobyerno,” Tumibay said during his live testimonial at the awarding.

na ‘yung iba pang bahagi ng Pilipinas na sinasabing maganda, maganda nga talaga at iyon ang nadidiskubre namin,” Tumibay said in excitement over the additional prizes from the BBMG program sponsors.

In her address, the tourism chief warmly congratulated Tumibay, and shared that the BBMG was conceptualized between the DOT and the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) during the time of the late Secretary Susan Ople, as a result of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.’s directive for the agencies to work together to champion and honor the country’s modern-day heroes.

“I am so happy today to join all of you as we award this most meaningful prize to our winner who has so generously gifted me with this bible, just now, that I will cherish for the rest of my life. Salamat kaayo sir, Mr. Ruperto Tumibay,” Secretary Frasco said.

“Awarding this major prize today in the form of a condominium is an expression of the national government’s gratitude, and of course, the private sector’s vibrant participation in giving value

to the contributions of our overseas Filipino workers who have sacrificed their time, their lives, their presence in our country to be able to contribute greatly to our economy,” she added. The tourism chief also conveyed her gratitude to SMDC, which is a platinum sponsor for BBMG.

“This would not have taken off without the most generous support of the private sector, foremost of which is SM and SMDC. Your generous contribution of nothing less than a prime condominium in a prime property here in Metro Manila is a tacit manifestation of your commitment to the development of our country and a manifestation of your love for the Philippines. It is precisely these acts of generosity that encourage us in government to continue to come up with

international air ticket courtesy of CebPac from CebPac gateway with round-trip ticket to MNL-IAO-MNL

*Turkish national Leah Joy Ince (invitee) who will also receive 4D3N accommodation with breakfast inclusive of activities at the Nay Palad Hideaway Siargao as well as 2D1N accom with breakfast at Conrad Hotel Manila (prior to flight to Siargao); and one roundtrip international air ticket courtesy of CebPac from CebPac gateway with roundtrip ticket to MNL-IAO-MNL

According to BBMG Secretary-General and DOT Assistant Secretary Maria Rica C. Bueno, the online referral tourism program has already generated close to 5,000 registered sponsors. They are composed of overseas Filipino workers, overseas Filipinos, as well as local Filipinos, and tour operators.

The BBMG is an incentivized promotional program of the DOT, in partnership with DMW, to entice Filipinos, primarily those residing and working overseas, to take an active role in the promotion of the local tourist destinations by inviting foreigners to visit the Philippines by signing up as sponsor and invitee at <https://bbmg.philippines.travel/>. Winners will be selected by a raffle draw and will have chances to win properties from partner institutions and exciting travel packages to select local destinations.



Other winners during the special raffle draw in October are:

*Robert Patrick Menor (sponsor) and Japanese national Miyuki Hirade (invitee) who both won 4D3N accommodation with breakfast at the Summit Hotel Tacloban and individual roundtrip international air ticket courtesy of CebPac from CebPac gateway with round-trip ticket to MNL-Leyte-MNL

*Jimrey Dapin (sponsor) who won 4D3N accommodation with breakfast at the Nouveau Resort Camiguin and one SM shopping voucher worth PHP65,000; and one round-trip international air ticket courtesy of CebPac from CebPac gateway with roundtrip ticket to MNL-Camiguin-MNL (via Cebu)

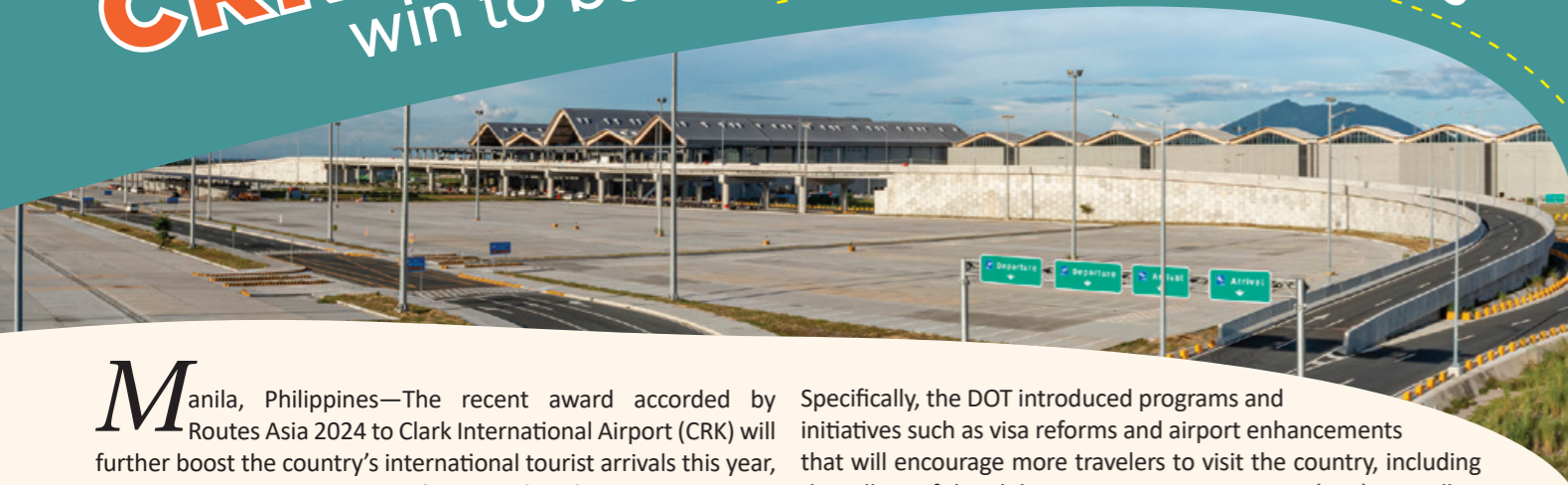
*Saudi Arabian national Ibrahim Alshegeiran (invitee) who also won a 4D3N accommodation with breakfast at the Nouveau Resort Camiguin and one round-trip international air ticket courtesy of CebPac from CebPac gateway with roundtrip ticket to MNL-Camiguin-MNL (via Cebu)

*Wendel Ilisan (sponsor) who will receive 4D3N accommodation with breakfast inclusive of activities at the Nay Palad Hideaway Siargao as well as 2D1N accommodation with breakfast at Conrad Hotel Manila (prior to flight to Siargao), one Rustans shopping voucher worth PHP140,000; and one round-trip

The grand raffle draw will happen in May this year, with one condominium unit courtesy of Megaworld Corporation as the major prize.

Source: Philippine Department of Tourism

CRK Routes Asia 2024 win to boost PH int'l tourist arrivals



Manila, Philippines—The recent award accorded by Routes Asia 2024 to Clark International Airport (CRK) will further boost the country's international tourist arrivals this year, according to the Department of Tourism (DOT).

CRK was named as the Routes Asia 2024 winner under the 5 Million Passengers Category.

"We are grateful for the recognition bestowed upon Clark International Airport at the Routes Asia Marketing Awards. Winning in the Under 5 Million Passengers category underscores the Marcos Administration's commitment to excellence in route development marketing. This achievement reflects the dedication of the travel and air transport team and the resilience of CRK, showcasing its remarkable growth and positive impact on the aviation and tourism industries," Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco said. She sits as the vice chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB).

Among Frasco's first directives is for the DOT to lobby for the full maximization of the country's regional gateways, including Clark.

Secretary Frasco further noted that "unlike its ASEAN counterparts such as Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia, which benefit from cross-border travel, connectivity remains the paramount challenge for the Philippines. Thus, the Department has been proactive in working with the transportation department and other concerned stakeholders to increase the country's connectivity. We are in full support of maximizing the use of other international gateways outside of Manila such as Clark and Cebu for the purpose of expanding direct flights, either commercial or chartered, not only toward the Philippines' key destinations but also to the emerging destinations across the country."



Specifically, the DOT introduced programs and initiatives such as visa reforms and airport enhancements that will encourage more travelers to visit the country, including the rollout of the Philippine Experience Program (PEP), as well as familiarization tours and regional expos to entice not only tourists but also potential investors.

"Receiving the Routes Asia Marketing Award is not just a triumph for Clark International Airport, it is also a testament to the collaborative efforts of the travel and tourism industry team and the unwavering support from the aviation community. This award fuels our commitment to continue pushing for the enhancement of connectivity and delivering top-notch airport services to our passengers through the healthy collaboration of our government air transportation agencies and private sector partners," the tourism chief added.

According to CRK, the award accorded by Routes Asia 2024 "follows CRK's exceptional performance in 2023, when it demonstrated significant growth by efficiently handling nearly two million passengers."

"This outstanding achievement presents a remarkable 160 percent increase from the preceding 12 months, manifesting the airport's resilience and robust recovery amid challenging circumstances," CRK added in a statement.

Among the local routes catered to by the airport include the country's prime destinations Palawan, Cebu, Boracay, among others.

This year, the DOT is targeting to register 7.7 million international tourist arrivals as baseline.

Source: Department of Tourism



Blackboxph Travel & Tours Embracing "Strong Beginnings"

As we step into the second quarter of 2024, Blackboxph Travel Corporation is excited to contribute to Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines' newsletter as its theme "Strong Beginnings" strongly reflects our belief in starting fresh with energy and purpose.

"Strong Beginnings" means embracing new opportunities, whether it's exploring new places, trying new things, or making new connections. It's about facing challenges head-on and believing in our ability to succeed.

In the world of travel, every journey starts with taking that first step. It's about being brave and chasing our dreams, no matter how big they may seem. At Blackboxph, we're all about aiming high and making things happen.

Our slogan this year is "WeCanDolt2024." It's a reminder that together, we have the power to achieve anything we set our minds to. It's about being confident, resilient, and never giving up, no matter what obstacles come our way.

With these themes guiding us, we continue to forge ahead with enthusiasm and determination to seize every opportunity that comes our way and make the most of it.



ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Blackboxph Travel & Tours was established in 2018, dedicated to crafting memorable travel experiences through personalized itineraries, expert guidance, and seamless logistics, ensuring unforgettable journeys for its clients. Today, the Blackboxph Travel Corporation's Head Quarters successfully operating in Sibonga, Cebu with markets in Cebu, Metro Manila, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Dubai and North America. www.flybb.ph

DIGGING INTO DAVAO

Chill or thrill, Davao fits the bill

In choosing what to do in a destination, there is no right or wrong. A traveler could hike the highest peak or simply lie down on the sand with a drink in hand. The question now is, where should one go to satisfy all types of traveler palates?

When exploring the Philippines, Davao Region is one destination that has something for everyone. If it's adventure you're looking for, it's Davao del Norte. But if it's relaxation or chilling out, it's Davao del Sur.

So here's what's in store when visiting this diverse region in the south:

DAVAO DEL NORTE

Tagtugonan Falls

Adventure buffs are in for a treat when visiting this 47-meter waterfall in Barangay Gupitan. Rappel your way to its refreshing water and take that well-deserved dip. And if you're not done, you can also go caving in the nearby Okbot cave.

Agriya Farm

If you want a little rustic fun yet educational trip, Agriya Farm is the go-to place. As a 'living farm', visitors can feed farm animals, rent a bike, go kayaking, ride the pedal boat, and even learn about the 67 banana varieties the farm showcases.

Cliff's Café

Adventures are not complete until you fill your stomach. At Cliff's Café, food is the star but so is the view! Heading there requires a bit of physical endurance but you'll be rewarded with a panoramic view of Davao del Norte's mountainscape as this restaurant is exactly right on a cliff.

Uraya's Peak

If you want to see the magnificence of Davao del Norte's Talaingod Mountains, the best place to be at is Uraya's Peak. This Instagrammable forest park has unique and playful observation decks. It also offers a camping ground where you can be one with nature.



Tagtugonan Falls



Agriya Farm



Cliff's Cafe



Jardin de Señorita



Dhen Yho's



Mt. Apo Agri-Ecotourism Park



Haven's Dew Mountain Resort



Uraya's Peak

DAVAO DEL SUR

Dhen Yho's

The formula for a great escape combines breathtaking views, a swimming pool, a garden, and if the weather cooperates, a glimpse of the country's highest peak known as Mt. Apo. All these you can experience at Dhen Yhos Family Resort where you can stay and say, "This is indeed, the perfect getaway."

Haven's Dew Mountain Resort

Another mountain resort in Davao del Sur that combines nature and relaxation is Haven's Dew. Festooned with colorful flowers and surrounded by greenery, this place will shut the noise and take you to dreamland in one of its quaint little cabins.

Jardin De Señorita

Colors affect mood, so they say. And when you're in Jardin De Señorita, that mood is elevated with the garden's abundant flowers, colorful tiny houses, and replicas of the Eiffel Tower and a Dutch windmill complementing this picturesque destination.

Mt. Apo Agri-Ecotourism Park

Not to be missed is none other than the Mt. Apo Agri-Ecotourism Park where weary souls can unwind and rejuvenate with an overnight stay (or two). This local economic enterprise, managed by the Provincial Government of Davao del Sur, overlooks Mt. Apo and also highlights Lake Cometa or the "Mirror Lake" as its water reflects the glorious mountain.

Know more about the Davao Region by downloading the Travel Philippines app!



Traditional houses



Locals in traditional attire



Breakfast at Kohang Garden View Deck



A local processing harvested rice stalks



Third tier of the Tenogtog Waterfalls



Mayoyao rice terraces view

TOP REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD EXPERIENCE

Mayoyao, Ifugao

What makes a 10-hour straight drive from Manila to the winding roads of Ifugao Province totally worth it? Majority would say it is the famed Banaue Rice Terraces or the amphitheatre-style Batad Rice Terraces.

Bearing unique features among each other, the rice terrace clusters are ingenious two-millennia grand masterpieces that catapulted not only the province but the whole country to global popularity. Less than we know, a humble and rustic Mayoyao town sits beside these known clusters and features a far massive and sprawling cluster of rice terraces. On a specified view deck, one needs to rotate more than 180 degrees to certainly marvel at the extensive rice terraces carved precariously from the steep mountain slopes of Mayoyao.

With such a breathtaking landscape and lesser foot traffic, you would expect to be in its more pristine state compared to the touristy Banaue - albeit signs of progressive development are evident.

Stepping at the doors of their Municipal Tourism Office at the road level kickstarts the beginning of our Mayoyao Experience. For five days, we tackled destinations and experiences that are truly remarkable and worth visiting. Here are five experiences in Mayoyao that will send you on a thrilling adventure and give you unforgettable memories:

SPLASH IN AT THE MULTI-TIERED TENOGTOG WATERFALLS

To chop and share the hunting bounties

The nomenclature of the developed three-tiered waterfalls park in Mayoyao invites you to experience the native hut-style amenities and the grandeur of its multi-cascades. The first level tier features a rocky catchbasin with a developed foot trail for safety. The Second and Third-tier waterfalls feature native-style huts just a few strides from the waist-deep catchbasins.

KHOHANG GARDEN VIEWDECK AND MAHENCHA WATERFALLS

Two destinations in a spot

Before marveling at the developed Mahencha waterfalls park, you can actually spend your breakfast hours right at the Kohang Garden Viewdeck and enjoy the breathtaking views while sipping your hot cup of native coffee. Surrounded by the vibrant colors of nature, you might actually encounter wildlife

as you trod downstream to the cascades and deep catchbasins of icy cold water.

SLEEP IN A TRADITIONAL IFUGAO NATIVE HOUSE

Unique with its iconic high tetrahedral roof and raised living quarters, these humble abodes speak much of the tight-knit living culture of the locals. Coordinate with the local tourism office and arrange an overnight stay in one of the available native houses and experience the Ifugao way of life. Marvel at the architectural ingenuity of basic design and space utilization with the safety of the dwellers in mind.

SEE THE SUNRISE FROM ANY RICE TERRACE

Being surrounded by towering peaks and summits, the Mayoyao Rice Terraces, at every point, can be your vantage point of the sunrise. As soon as the blazing disc floats above the undulating horizon, the sleepy landscape transforms into a breathing and lively vista.

EXPERIENCE THE RICE CULTIVATING CULTURE

The Mayoyao locals' way of life stems from rice-cultivating practices shaped by the mountainous terrain. Visiting the paddies may actually require you to plan on a specific month or quarter following the cultivation cycle. Months of February and March mean a season of planting hence, the paddies feature mirror effects from the flooded terraces, while May and June are at their green peak in which the terraces seem like carpets from afar. You can arrange with the local tourism office if you wish to try rice planting, harvesting, or threshing, activities that highlight the importance of food security.

It is truly hard to give justice to Mayoyao by simply writing about it - you must see it and experience it yourself. The array of experiences and destinations offers beauty and intangible treasures that allow you to understand deeply the Ifugao culture, beliefs, tradition, and heritage.



About the Blogger:

KAPAMPANGAN TRAVELLER

An amateur photographer and passionate advocate of Philippine tourism with a goal of visiting and showcasing the beauty and richness of Filipino culture, one province at a time.
www.kapampangantraveller.com

My Hometown



Photo credits to Harvest Hotel

Must Try!



Photo credits to Nery's Hotel & Resorts



Photo credits to City Government of Cabanatuan

Luzon

Content creator **Ivan de Guzman** provides insider tips on the best experiences available in his hometown of Cabanatuan City.



Q: Where is your home town?

A: My hometown is in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija. Known as the "Tricycle Capital of the Philippines," it's a bustling city surrounded by vast rice fields and agricultural landscapes.

Which accommodations would you recommend for tourists in your hometown?

My city offers plenty of hotel options, but my top four recommendations for potential tourists are Harvest Hotel, Microtel by Wyndham, Rosey Hotel, and Nery's Hotel & Resorts.

What food should they definitely try to eat?

Exploring the culinary landscape of Cabanatuan presents an exciting adventure with an array of delectable choices to discover. However, I would be happy to highlight the must-try Garlic Longganisa, Sweet Longganisa, and our very own Batutay Longganisa, each showcasing the city's culinary creativity. Additionally, for a taste of authentic Filipino flavors, diners can indulge in the offerings at renowned eateries like Vicenticos, Bistro 360, and Rustica, all of which come highly recommended with top-notch ratings.

Which activity/ies should they try when they visit?

In our hometown, there aren't many activities to engage in, but there's an abundance of establishments to explore. Nevertheless, our city holds the title of being the "Tricycle Capital of the Philippines," and I believe recommending a tricycle ride to non-locals could be an enriching experience. When you visit my hometown, you'll notice countless tricycles bustling about, ready to transport you to your desired destination.



Visit the majestic Panay Church, a national historical landmark in Capiz



Seafood dishes in Capiz are a must-try according to Chef Don

Visayas

Chef Don Baldosano, a Capiznon, shares the best places and the most delicious food that his hometown has to offer.



Q: Where is your home town?

A: My Province is Capiz

Which accommodations would you recommend for tourists in your hometown?

Espacio Verde Resort where there are a couple of villas that will make you feel at home.

What food should they definitely try to eat?

Being the seafood capital of the Philippines, seafood is definitely top notch and something you should have here: from oysters by the beach to a variety of different fish and even seasonal fairs like Diwal or Angel Wings.

Which activity/ies should they try when they visit?

First activity that comes to mind when in Capiz is to visit the different beaches, especially Baybay Beach. Another favorite place to go to is Ruins of Alcatraz.

Baybay Beach



Chef recommends exploring the beautiful and serene Baybay Beach

My Hometown

Mindanao

Entrepreneur and content creator **Jinkie Lorain** lists all the places and all the food that tourists must try in her hometown, Davao City.



Q: Where is your home town?

A: My hometown is Davao City!

Which accommodations would you recommend for tourists in your hometown?

Waterfront Insular Hotel Davao! It's a beachfront hotel, facing Island Garden City of Samal and it's situated in a great location; it's accessible, near to SM Lanang & close to airport! The best part is they have the best buffet in the city! On special occasions like Kadayawan, they serve Crocodile Meat, Davao's Pomelo, Durian Cheesecake and more!

Which activity/ies should they try when they visit?

Go visit Magsaysay Park to eat fruits like Pomelo, Durian & Lansones! Go on a day tour at Malagos Garden Resort! Watch the longest interactive bird show in the Philippines and make your own box of chocolates from Malagos! Experience recreational activities at Eden Garden Nature Park and Resort & lastly, explore the beautiful coral reefs of Paradise Island, a 15 minute away beach resort from Davao.

What food should they definitely try to eat?

If you visit Davao, it's a must to try Durian! (my favorite variety is Chani, it's the creamiest & milkiest type!)

But, if you wanted to go on a food trip— Here's a list of my favorite food from my hometown :

1. Bulalo with utok, (cow's brain) Chicharon Bulalak from Bull's Eye Sandawa!
2. Lachi's Classic or Durian Sansrival Cake or Lachi's Creme Brulee Cake!
3. Pastil rice with Isaw & Pork BBQ from Pastilan sa Ponce!
4. Langka Bulad sa Gata from Cafe Tavera
5. Coconut Chili & Sweet & Salted Egg Crab from Blue Posts Boiling Crabs and Shrimps



Bulalo with utok

Durian Sansrival Cake



BEYOND THE WORKSPACE:

TPB Explores the Underwater World

An Open Water Dive course was organized by the TPB Human Resource Division for its marketing officers last 21 – 22 February 2024 at Scandi Dive Resort in Puerto Galera where 20 employees from different departments participated.

This training is a component of the agency's Learning and Development Program, which aims to improve employees' marketing skills and build a pool of TPB-licensed divers to further promote the Philippines as a diving destination.



HERstory in March



The whole month of March has been declared as a celebration of "The Role of Women in History" under Proclamation No. 227. This demonstrates the many contributions made by Filipino women who have historically come from every ethnic origin, class, and religion to the progress and power of the nation.

It's Time for HER: Honoring Everyone's Radiance is this year's Women's Month Celebration (WMC) theme. The goal is to raise awareness of one's inner and outer well-being, health, and happiness. This results in an optimistic outlook that shines from within.

To commemorate women's month, TPB prepared a number of events such as improving one's appearance through makeovers, discussing gender issues, advocacy preparation, and film screening. The intention is to empower its employees - men and women alike—to show what they are capable of and also provide a relaxing and rejuvenating experience.

One of the highlights of this month's festivities was the Self-Care Fair. The two-day event included massage, manicure, pedicure, and haircut. The TPB was given a chance to be sponsored by Sunnies Face in which personal care kits that include sunscreen and micellar oil makeup remover were provided by the brand. In addition, a feature activity that aimed to increase self-confidence included Ms. Cheryl Cabanos's make-up tutorial for women and good grooming sessions for males.

Other activities of Women's Month Celebration included:

- All Women's Run Asia on 03 March 2024 at the SM MOA Complex
- Ceremonial Signing of the TPB Policy on Mainstreaming Gender and Development (GAD) on 13 March 2024
- NWMC Film Showing Activity featuring the film Barbie on 13 March 2024
- Purple Wednesdays – Wearing of any purple polo/ collared shirt/blouse/dress every Wednesday for the month of March 2024 to express our support in the celebration of Women's Month.
- Purple Your Icon Campaign - Posting of 2024 WMC Digital Banners at the TPB Lobby
- Use of WMC-Themed Zoom Backgrounds.
- WMC Information Dissemination - Inclusion of 2024 WMC posters in the bulletin board, closed TPB FB group and flag ceremonies.



CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES (APRIL TO JUNE 2024)

APR 05-07

Marine Diving Fair (MDF)

Sunshine City Convention Center, Ikebukuro, Tokyo, Japan

APR 12-14

Asia Dive Expo (ADEX)

Singapore

APR 19-21

DRT Show Taiwan

Taipei Flora EXPO Dome, Taipei City, Taiwan

APR 20-27

Domestic Tourism Invitational Program

SOCCSKSARGEN

APR 26-27

Philippine Motorcycle Tourism - NFMCP 27th Annual Convention

Subic

MAY 06-09

Arabian Travel Market

Dubai

MAY 08

TPB Member's Thinktalk Session - Virtual

MAY 21-24

TPB Member's Familiarization Tours

Zamboanga del Norte

MAY 24-26

Philippine Motorcycle Tourism - Philippine Vespa Days 2024

Bataan

MAY 29-31

American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) Global Convention 2024

Bataan

MAY 31-JUN 3

Taipei Tourism Ezpo 2024

Taipei World Trade Center, Taiwan

JUN 01-02

Blue Ocean Fes Diving Fes Kansai

Osaka, Japan

JUN 06-08

TPB Member's CSR Activity

Zambales

JUN 07-09

Malaysia International Dive Expo (MIDE)

Kuala Lumpur



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SAVE THE DATE

10 - 12 July 2024 | Clark Freeport Zone