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- DENR to vet 32 eco-tourism sites for impact on economy

# DENR to vet 32 eco-tourism sites for impact on economy

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The government will be assessing 32 potential ecotourism sites to determine their impact on the economy, as well as their economic benefits to indigenous people (IP).



Tubbataha Reef (AP Photo/MANILA BULLETIN)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) proposed to subject the sites for evaluation under the ecotourism tracking tool (ETT) in partnership with the Department of Tourism (DOT).

According to ERDB forester Ma. Lourdes Reyes, the sites to be assessed will be sampled from the priority ecotourism sites identified by the DOT's Regional Ecotourism Council under the National Ecotourism Strategy and Action Plan from 2002 to 2012.

The potential ecotourism sites are Batanes, Vigan, Peñablanca, Banawe Rice Terraces, Hundred Islands, Mt. Pinatubo, Wawa Dam, Mt. Makiling, Tagaytay/Taal Volcano, Mt. Isarog, Mayon Volcano, Donsol, Bulusan Volcano, Apo Reef, Mt. Guiting-Guiting, El Nido, Puerto Princesa Underground River, Tubbataha Reef,

Sohoton Caves, Lake Danao, Mt. Kanlaon, Olango Island, Bohol, Tañon Strait, Apo Island, Siargao, Camiguin Island, Agusan Marsh, Misamis Oriental, Dipolog, Mt. Apo, and Lake Sebu.

The certification system through the ETT was developed by ERDB as part of an accreditation system so that sites that are said to be an ecotourism site will really have ecological value for tourists and the environment.

“This tool will help concerned authorities monitor and evaluate the real activities of resorts, recreational and tourism sites in relation to their friendliness to the environment and adherence to the principles of ecotourism,” ERDB Director Henry Adornado said.

ETT has been devised to also evaluate tourist sites’ impact on the economy and on their economic benefits to indigenous people, he explained.

IPs and host communities of ecotourism sites, which are often found in biodiversity-rich areas, are bound to have the most interest in protecting natural resources.

ERDB is also partnering with DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau for the preservation of biodiversity.

The ecotourism certification system will label sites under four classifications namely, platinum certification (91-100 percent adherence to the ETT standard); gold certification (81-90 percent); silver certification (71-80 percent); bronze certification (61-70 percent); and 50-60 percent ) candidate ecotourism project.

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