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ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
No. 2013 - **19**

JUL 0 1 2013

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES ON ECOTOURISM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT IN PROTECTED AREAS

Pursuant to Executive Order 192 (Reorganization Act of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources), Republic Act No. 7586 (National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992), Executive Order No.111 (Guidelines for Ecotourism Development in the Philippines), Republic Act No. 9593 (Tourism Act of 2009), Republic Act No. 9710 (Magna Carta of Women), and other relevant issuances, and in order to provide direction in ecotourism planning and management in protected areas, this Order is hereby issued for the guidance of all concerned.

Section 1. Basic Policy.   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 for the enjoyment of the present and future generations. It is also the policy of the State to recognize sustainable tourism development as integral to the national socio-economic development efforts to improve the quality of life of the Filipino people providing the appropriate attention and support for the growth of this industry; and promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities. Furthermore, the State affirms the role of women in nation building and ensures the substantive equality of women and men. It shall likewise promote empowerment of women, pursue equal opportunities for women and men, and ensure equal access to resources and to development results and outcome.

Section 2. Objectives.   The general objective of this Administrative Order is to recognize and operationalize ecotourism for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in protected areas. It shall also have the following specific objectives:

1. To institutionalize ecotourism planning and management process in protected area management;

2. To promote advocacy on the concept and principles of ecotourism;

3. To introduce ecotourism businesses in protected areas both as a conservation strategy and an economic development option through viable business partnerships with the local government units or the private sector:

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4. To promote inclusive equity of socio-economic benefits to the local community and indigenous cultural communities and encourage community participation; and

5. To ensure the participation of both women and men in the ecotourism planning and management and that gender-related issues are addressed in the ecotourism management plan.

Section 3. Scope and Coverage.   This Order shall apply to ecotourism planning and management in protected areas under the National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) identified as having potential for ecotourism development. This may refer to terrestrial, coastal and marine, caves, and wetland ecosystems in NIPAS areas.

Section. 4. Definition of Terms.   For purposes of this Order, the following terms are defined as follows:

1. *Business Planning* – refers to the process of identifying long-term goals for a business or business segment, and formulating realistic strategies for reaching those goals. The business plan includes marketing, operation, management and environmental issues besetting a target site.

2. *Ecotourism* – refers to a form of sustainable tourism within a natural and cultural heritage area where community participation, protection and management of natural resources, culture and indigenous knowledge and practices, environmental education and ethics as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host communities and satisfaction of visitors.

3. *Ecotourism Product* – refers to a combination of ecotourism resources, facilities, activities and services resulting in enhanced commitment to protect the natural and cultural heritage areas.

4. *Protected Areas* – refers to identified portions of land and water set aside by reason of their unique physical and biological significance, managed to enhance biological diversity and protected against destructive human exploitation pursuant to the NIPAS Act of 1992 *(RA 7586)*.

Section 5. Ecotourism Concepts and Principles.   Ecotourism management and development shall be in accordance with the following internationally accepted principles:

1. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
2. Ownership by the local communities providing them business opportunities to sustain their well-being;
3. Gender responsiveness and adherence to inclusive growth that considers women, children, indigenous peoples and informal sector activities;
4. Promotion of learning experience and conservation awareness;
5. Responsible action on the part of tourists and the tourism industry; and

6. Delivery to appropriate number of participants and businesses that observe and follow ecotourism and conservation concepts, ensuring appropriate development and visitor control.

Section 6. Ecotourism Planning and Management Process. The Ecotourism Planning and Management Process is divided into four (4) phases, namely:

1. *Site Assessment.* This phase will determine whether or not ecotourism management and development is the right strategy for the protected area. This consists of the following steps:

    a) *Preliminary Site Evaluation.* This involves answering basic questions in a checklist in order to determine whether a particular site is appropriate for ecotourism development, and therefore needs to continue with the planning process for ecotourism development in the protected area.

    b) *Full Site Assessment.* This is conducted to determine the possible extent of ecotourism development that can be done in the site. It will help identify existing situations that either help or constrain ecotourism development in the site.

    In this phase, sex-disaggregated data and gender-related information should also be collected.

2. *Ecotourism Planning.* This involves the formulation of the Ecotourism Management Plan (EMP). The data collected in the Site Assessment phase and the corresponding recommendations shall be the inputs to the formulation of the Plan. The Plan should be consistent with the existing Protected Area Management Plan.

    The PASU shall initiate the preparation of the Ecotourism Management Plan and shall involve concerned stakeholders such as, but not limited to, LGUs, other agencies concerned (e.g. Department of Tourism, NEDA); local communities including women's groups, indigenous cultural communities; and the private sector (e.g. tour operators and investors).

    The process involves preparing the vision, goals, objectives, strategies, programs and projects including identification of possible ecotourism enterprises/businesses that may be developed in the area. These will serve as the bases in the actual physical and program development of ecotourism in the area.

    The component strategies for the formulation of the Ecotourism Management Plan are provided under Section 7 hereof.

    The approval process for the EMP is provided under Section 8 of this Order.

    Based on the approved Ecotourism Management Plan, business plans shall be formulated in partnership with the LGU or private sector.   The business

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plan is a more detailed review of the specific activity, attraction or service that will be developed. It deals with marketing, operations and management of ecotourism enterprises/businesses.

An Implementation Plan shall also be prepared to guide the Protected Area Superintendent (PASU) in the execution of the ecotourism activities.

3. *Implementation.* The implementation of the Ecotourism Management Plan shall be in accordance with the timelines, implementation arrangements and the proposed budget provided in the Implementation Plan. The implementation arrangements are provided under Section 9 hereof.

The business plans shall be implemented by the LGU or private sector partner. The details of business planning and operation are provided under Section 10 of this Order.

4. *Monitoring and Evaluation.* A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan shall be developed to provide for the mechanism of monitoring and evaluating the progress of the Ecotourism Management Plan implementation, and the key indicators for impact monitoring. The details of the Monitoring and Evaluation Scheme are provided under Section 11 hereof.

The flow chart of the ecotourism planning and management process indicating the timelines and responsibility areas is shown in Annex A while the detailed discussion of the simplified ecotourism planning process is provided in Annex B.

Section 7. Component Strategies for the Formulation of the Ecotourism Management Plan. The formulation of the Ecotourism Management Plan shall consist of the following component strategies: 1. Zoning for Visitor Use; 2. Visitor Site Planning and Design; 3. Sustainable Infrastructure Design; 4. Visitor Management; and 5. Revenue generation.

In carrying out the above strategies, the following shall be taken into consideration:

1. The result of the zoning shall be the basis for selecting and designating Tourism Enterprise Zones (TEZs) as provided for in the Tourism Act;
2. Site planning shall require the preparation of an actual plan and topographic map on which all existing planned ecotourism infrastructure is placed, such as eco-lodges, trails, campsite, visitor center, or toilet facilities.
3. For actual site development, resources to be provided by the DENR shall be used for infrastructure and facilities supporting its mandate on site protection such as Protected Area Office/station, information center, watch towers, patrol boat, and the like, while the support of the private sector or the LGU shall be engaged for the construction/provision of other visitor facilities/amenities needed for ecotourism development;
4. The sustainable infrastructure design shall be in accordance with the guidelines provided under DAO 2009-09, *Standard Design and*

Specification of Signs, Buildings, facilities and other Infrastructure That May Be Installed and/or Constructed Within Protected Areas or other relevant rules that may be issued by the DENR;

5. Visitor management shall be supported by a carrying capacity study. For this purpose, the DENR shall issue the guidelines for determining the carrying capacity of the ecotourism site;

6. For revenue generation, determination of fees in protected areas shall be in accordance with existing guidelines and other applicable and relevant rules that may be issued by the DENR; and

7. The results of the strategies shall serve as guide in determining the appropriate ecotourism businesses that may be developed and in what specific site these should take place within the protected area.

Detailed discussion of the strategies is provided in Annex B Item 3.B.

Section 8. Approval of the Ecotourism Management Plan. Upon completion of the Ecotourism Planning process in accordance with Section 6 hereof, the Ecotourism Management Plan shall be reviewed by the Regional Ecotourism Committee (REC) and if found in order, the REC shall recommend it for approval by the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB).Provided that, if the Plan needs further improvement based on the REC review, the recommendations should be immediately addressed and subsequently, the revised Plan should be submitted for approval.

Section 9. Implementation Arrangements. The Protected Area Superintendent (PASU) shall spearhead the implementation of the Ecotourism Management Plan ensuring that all activities in the Plan are followed.

An Ecotourism Sub-committee in the PAMB shall be established to perform the following functions:

1. Advise the lead person/office concerning implementation of the Ecotourism Management Plan;

2. Provide voluntary actual support, both in the field and in the office, if necessary;

3. Serve as liaison to the community and respective sector; and

4. Serve as liaison to the legal entities operating the ecotourism and tourism-related businesses in the ecotourism site.

The PAMB shall formulate implementing site rules and regulations, controlling number of people and their access to facilities of the park, based on the Ecotourism Management Plan.

The PASU shall prepare an annual work plan based on the Ecotourism Management Plan that includes the following:

1. Activities to be conducted
2. Persons responsible for the conduct of activities
3. Location and timeframe of activities
4. Resources to be used to accomplish the activities

Marketing and promotions shall be conducted for the ecotourism product in the site, with assistance and support from the Department of Tourism (DOT) and other partners.

Section 10. Ecotourism Business Planning and Operation. The LGU or private sector partner may initiate the preparation of the business plan. The DENR shall provide technical support to communities and other groups who need assistance in the preparation of the business plan. The business planning process and the outline of business plan are provided in Annex C.

Upon review and recommendation by the Regional Ecotourism Committee (REC), the Business Plan for ecotourism projects shall be approved by the PAMB.

For the conduct and operation of ecotourism businesses or enterprises, the PAMB shall engage partners, either the LGU or private sector. The partnership shall be formalized through tenurial instruments like the Special Use Agreement in Protected Areas (SAPA), and the Protected Area Community-based Resource Management Agreement (PACBRMA).

Implementation of the business plan shall also follow all applicable existing rules and regulations implemented by DENR and other government agencies, including LGU laws, rules and regulations.

Section 11. Monitoring and Evaluation Scheme. The implementation of the Ecotourism Management Plan shall be monitored in a two-tiered mechanism. The first tier involves monitoring of the progress of Ecotourism Management Plan implementation. The second tier involves the monitoring of the impacts of the Plan, to determine the effects of ecotourism development and environmental protection in the area, and the community benefits. The DENR and REC shall monitor the implementation of the Ecotourism Management Plan. Other stakeholders may also be involved in the regular monitoring process.

The DENR shall issue the corresponding guidelines prescribing the monitoring tool to be used pursuant to this Section.

Section 12. Capacity Building. Ecotourism management and development including business operation require various skills and competencies and should be supported with a capacity building program that will cater to the government implementors, local communities including women's groups, and the indigenous cultural communities. Capacity building shall include providing training, site visits and collaboration with other entities that can help improve the management and implementation capacities of the concerned DENR personnel, other government agencies, LGUs, local communities and other stakeholders. This will be pursued by the DENR in partnership with other government agencies, local government units, civil society, the academe and private sector.

Section 13. Institutional Arrangements. Recognizing the fact that tourism and conservation depend largely on networks, institutional arrangements shall be conducted with, but not limited to, the following agencies, as necessary:

1. Planning, Ecotourism Product Development, Marketing and Promotion, – Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and other marketing institutions;
2. Business Planning – Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), UP Institute of Small Scale Industries (ISSI), non-government organizations (NGOs), and similar institutions;
3. Financial Support – Tourism Infrastructure Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), Local Government Units (LGUs), Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), and other donor agencies.
4. Approval of project proposals – Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) upon review and recommendation of the Regional Ecotourism Committee (REC).

The DENR may request the assistance of other agencies or institutions as may be necessary to support the implementation of ecotourism programs and activities that may be developed pursuant to this Order.

Section 14. Funding. The DENR shall allocate funds for the implementation of this Order and encourage contribution from other partners such as national government agencies, LGUs, NGOs and the private sector. Other sources of funds that may be tapped are Overseas Development Assistance and other funding agencies. Revenues generated from the operation of the ecotourism site shall accrue to the Integrated Protected Area Fund (IPAF) which can be tapped for the implementation of the Ecotourism Management Plan and continued management of the site.

Section 15. Transitory Provision. All on-going initiatives and activities on ecotourism in protected areas shall be reviewed by the PAMB and aligned with the principles, concept and processes provided in this Order. Provided that, the DENR shall ensure that environmental safeguards prescribed herein are adhered to and complied within the management and development of ecotourism in protected areas.
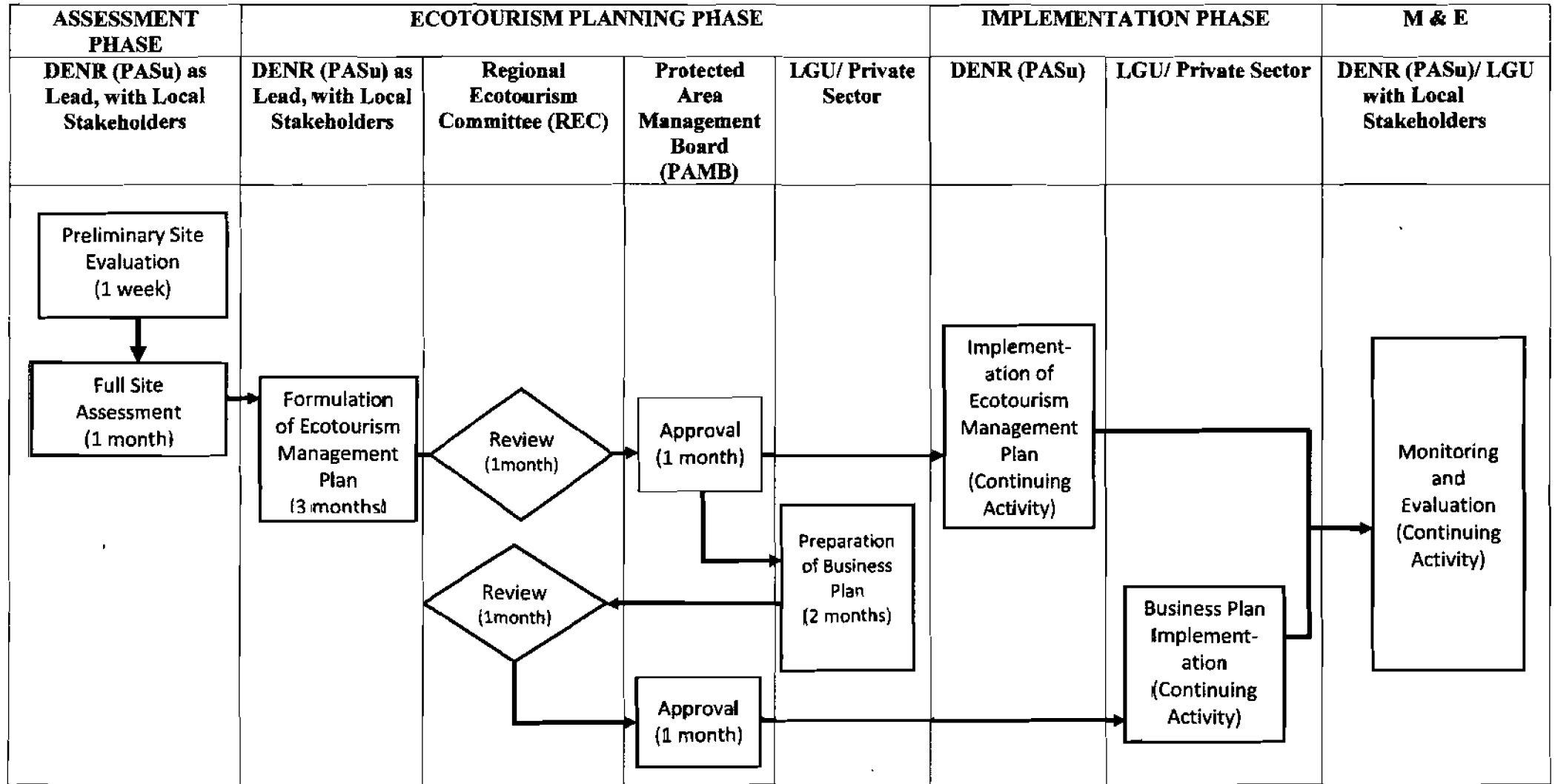
Section 16. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Order is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions hereof.

Section 17. Repealing Clause. All orders and issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Order are hereby amended, modified or repealed accordingly.

Section 18. Effectivity. This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation and filing of a copy hereof to the Office of the National Administrative Register.

RAMON J.P. PAJE
Secretary

SENR035307

ANNEX A. Ecotourism Planning and Management Process

ASSESSMENT PHASE	ECOTOURISM PLANNING PHASE				IMPLEMENTATION PHASE		M & E
DENR (PASu) as Lead, with Local Stakeholders	DENR (PASu) as Lead, with Local Stakeholders	Regional Ecotourism Committee (REC)	Protected Area Management Board (PAMB)	LGU/ Private Sector	DENR (PASu)	LGU/ Private Sector	DENR (PASu)/ LGU with Local Stakeholders

Flowchart:

- Preliminary Site Evaluation (1 week) → Full Site Assessment (1 month) → Formulation of Ecotourism Management Plan (3 months) → Review (1month) → Approval (1 month)
- Approval (1 month) → Preparation of Business Plan (2 months) → Review (1month) → Approval (1 month)
- Approval (1 month) → Implementation of Ecotourism Management Plan (Continuing Activity) → Monitoring and Evaluation (Continuing Activity)
- Approval (1 month) → Business Plan Implementation (Continuing Activity) → Monitoring and Evaluation (Continuing Activity)

ANNEX B

ECOTOURISM PLANNING PROCESS

Ecotourism Planning and Management Process is divided into four (4) phases, namely: 1. Site Assessment; 2. Ecotourism Planning; 3. Implementation of the Ecotourism Management Plan; and 4. Monitoring and Evaluation.

The following is a discussion of the simplified process for Ecotourism Planning.

1. SITE ASSESSMENT

a) Preliminary Site Evaluation

The basic assumption for the Preliminary Site Evaluation (PSE) is that the protected area has already undergone a site evaluation as a requirement for the preparation of the Protected Area Management Plan. The information derived from the site evaluation may already be used for purposes of the PSE.

The PSE is a method of answering basic questions in a checklist (see below) in order to determine whether a particular site is appropriate for ecotourism development, and therefore needs to continue with the planning process for ecotourism in the area.

Checklist for Preliminary Site Evaluation (PSE)

It is recommended that the checklist be accomplished through a focused group discussion of people who are familiar with the situation in the protected area, and some resource persons from the tourism sector. This collective discussion will provide a better decision of whether to proceed to the ecotourism planning process.

GUIDE QUESTIONS	RESPONSE	REMARKS
1. Are there significant potential natural and/or cultural attractions in the area?		
2. Can visitor access to the attractions be easily established?		
3. Can the attractions be protected at an acceptable level from the impacts of visitation?		
4. Is the area free of security problems and or natural hazards that cannot be effectively controlled by the management of the area or local authorities?		
5. Does the protected area have sufficient management and administrative authority to effectively manage implementation and monitoring of an ecotourism program at site level?		
6. Is there a reasonable expectation that initial funding needed to develop ecotourism will be available?		
7. Are the protected area managers, tour operators and communities willing to		

GUIDE QUESTIONS	RESPONSE	REMARKS
conform to ecotourism guidelines, i.e. low impact, small groups, impact monitoring, working with and actively involving communities?		
8. Will visitation improve biodiversity health or reduce threats to conservation targets?		

The response to all the questions should be positive. In case of any negative response, the Focused Group Discussion (FGD) should deliberate on the question and make a collective decision on whether to proceed or not.

b) Full Site Assessment

Once ecotourism is determined to be appropriate in the area, full site assessment can be conducted to determine the possible extent of ecotourism development that can be done in the site. Full site assessment will help identify existing situations that either help or constrain ecotourism development of the site. As much as possible all information gathered during the site assessment should be sex-disaggregated.

Full site assessment is a data gathering process that involves the following:

1. Review of Existing Data
Gather as many written materials necessary for ecotourism planning such as the Protected Area Management Plan and other existing plans, relevant laws, policies, scientific and other technical studies, wildlife inventories, monitoring reports, visitor surveys, tourism statistics, maps, etc. pertaining to the proposed area and the surrounding communities.

2. Fieldwork
Fieldwork should be conducted to validate knowledge and information about the protected area. Maps should be prepared and studied in order to become familiar with the general layout of the area, and the location of the natural and cultural features, the trails and infrastructure, and the areas most visited by tourists, and potential areas for ecotourism. Data from fieldwork would include photos, observations, notations on the map, and field notes.

3. Interviews
Formal and informal interviews should be done with people who know the protected area in order to gather informed opinions. Informants should include visitors, communities within and adjacent to the area, the personnel of the protected area, and those people involved with programs and projects in the area such as extension workers, academic/scientific researchers, government workers, etc. As much as possible, there should be a balance in number of men and women respondents.

4. Questionnaires and Surveys
When specific answers are needed for specific data needed, questionnaires may be used for the interviews and surveys. Design and conduct of surveys may require the assistance of specialists, NGOs, academe, etc.

5. Consultative Meetings and Workshops
Stakeholders should be convened in meetings and workshops to obtain information and opinions about the protected area. These meetings and workshops should also be used to inform the participants about the protected area, the objectives of the protected area, and the reasons for developing ecotourism in the area.

6. Preparing the Full Site Assessment Report

All information gathered during this process should be consolidated in a report that should contain the elements discussed below. Recommendations shall be formulated and considered in the preparation of the Ecotourism Management Plan.

Full Site Assessment should focus on the following data categories:

DATA CATEGORY	QUESTIONS/DATA REQUIREMENTS
1.Natural resources and features	i. What are the natural resources in the area? ii. Are there flagship species? iii. Have inventories been done? iv. What are the endangered species in the area? v. What are the scenic attractions? vi. Where are the critical areas needing protection?
2. Cultural resources	i. What are the historical, archaeological or cultural sites? ii. What are the cultural or historical events that can attract tourism? iii. What about historical and cultural sites and events in the adjacent areas? iv. What are the traditional knowledge and practices in the area? v. Are there other agencies involved in these sites and events? vi. Are there indigenous peoples in the area? vii. Will they permit ecotourism development in the area?
3. Protected area management	i. What are the zoning categories in the protected area? ii. Is there a Protected Area Management Plan? iii. Is there adequate staffing in the protected area management office? iv. What are the threats in the area? v. What are the impacts of visitors in the area? vi. Are there studies conducted in the area? Who are doing research in the area? vii. Is monitoring conducted in the area by the protected area staff?
4. Visitor patterns, activities, infrastructure	i. What are the visitor attractions in the area? ii. How accessible is the site? iii. What are the visitor activities in the area? iv. What are the visitor statistics, are these gender-disaggregated? v. Have visitor surveys been conducted? vi. How much fees are paid for entrance, use of facilities, etc.? vii. What facilities and infrastructure are available and what are the conditions of these? viii. What are the IEC programs or nature interpretation programs in the area? ix. Are guides available in the area?

DATA CATEGORY	QUESTIONS/DATA REQUIREMENTS
5. Tourism plans and policies	i. Does the Protected Area Management Plan have a chapter on ecotourism? ii. What are the existing tourism plans in the area? iii. What are the tourism plans of the LGUs in the area?
6. Communities	i. Are there communities inside and adjacent to the protected area? ii. What are their economic activities? iii. Are they involved in tourism activities in the area? iv. What are their businesses in the area or adjacent area?
7. Partnerships	i. Are there partnerships with LGUs, NGOs, POs, local communities, private sector, academe in the protected area? ii. What kind of agreements are there? iii. Are there partnerships with the tourism sector? iv. Are these partnerships successful?
8. Marketing and promotions	i. What are the marketing efforts of the protected area management? ii. Is the protected area well known or does it need more promotion? iii. What are the promotion activities done by the LGUs, NGOs or government agencies? iv. What IEC materials are available?
9. Opportunities and threats	i. What new opportunities can be used to enhance ecotourism in the area? ii. What are the threats to promoting ecotourism in the area?

Considerations for Full Site Assessment

The factors to be considered in the Full Site Assessment Process are, namely: 1) Access; 2) Zoning considerations; 3)Tourism built-up area/s; 4) Development limitations; 5) Ecotourism products;6) Ecotourism operation; 7) Community participation; 8) Skills and training of communities; 9) Markets and marketing; 10) Site management; 11) Visitor management; and 12) Partnership.

1. Access

Access consideration includes the connecting point used by the tourists to reach the ecotourism site such as the nearest city or town proper. It should also include travel time, modes of transport and number of transfers.

2. Zoning Considerations

Zoning is important in ecotourism development as it shows how tourist facilities can be developed. An example would be beach zoning which would indicate setbacks, buffers, and development/built-up zone.

3. Tourism Built-up Area/s

Tourism built-up areas will be the center of development for the tourist facilities, access infrastructure (e.g. parking lot), and administrative facilities. Built-up areas are designed to concentrate development and restrict high level of impacts to a little area as possible to prevent creating impacts to a wider coverage. Tourism built-up areas are also designed to absorb the most number of visitors and use it as a takeoff point to various attractions within the ecotourism site.

4. Development Limitations

Development limitations are formulated to prevent unnecessary degradation of the environment because of tourism development. It already sets the limits of development for obvious development possibilities. Examples include setting up of structure at the base of waterfalls, building of structures that will affect the aesthetic value of the sites, limited or no entry to sensitive areas.

5. Ecotourism Products

This refers to a combination of ecotourism resources, facilities, activities and services resulting in enhanced commitment to protect the natural and cultural heritage areas. Natural attractions such as mountains, lakes, beaches and the unique flora and fauna are the main reasons why tourists visit an area; therefore, product development shall focus on these attractions, supplemented subsequently by services and activities that will enhance visitor satisfaction. Trekking, bird watching, whale and dolphin watching, diving, and other outdoor recreational activities are some examples of experience-based products that can be developed.

6. Ecotourism Operation

Ecotourism operations may be community-managed, LGU, or commercial tours operated within an ecotourism site.

7. Community Participation

Community participation is considered significant in the management of an ecotourism site. Community participation encourages economic equity and active involvement in the utilization and protection of the natural resources. It is important to mainstream gender equity in ecotourism activities and women's groups should play a key role in community participation.

8. Skills and Training of Local Communities

Successful community-based ecotourism programs involve a number of capacity building and enhancement. Enough and appropriate training programs should be included in the management and development of an ecotourism site.

9. Markets and Marketing

Present and projected visitors will help define the magnitude of development of an ecotourism site. There must be an effort to determine the sources, types, and preferences of the existing and potential visitors to the site to develop the right types of facilities.

10. Site Management

The success and sustainability of ecotourism development is highly dependent on management and an entity mandated to look after the site. The entity should be able to monitor and manage ecotourism businesses within the area, look after the well-being, safety and satisfaction of the visitors, and ensure that impacts are prevented or mitigated.

11. Visitor Management

Uncontrolled visitors may create negative impacts to the ecotourism site. Visitor management should include flow management (movement), being well informed through the use of signage and doing the proper behavior while inside the ecotourism site.

12. Partnership

Any tourism site would be hard to manage without active partnership with other entities with similar objectives or mandates to protect the ecotourism site and promote ecotourism. Identify these organizations and seek out active partnership or collaboration for ecotourism programs.

2. ECOTOURISM PLANNING

The data collected in the Site Assessment phase and the corresponding recommendations shall be the inputs to the formulation of the Ecotourism Management Plan. For protected areas, a major requisite in this phase is the Protected Area Management Plan, which is the basis for ecotourism planning.

A. Major Elements of the Ecotourism Management Plan

The Ecotourism Planning and Management process shall serve as the basis in the actual physical and program development of ecotourism in the protected area. The major elements of the Ecotourism Management Plan shall include the following:

1. Site Profile
Site profile would include general information on the destination that will help the stakeholders come up with appropriate plans and programs.

2. Tourism Situation
This serves as the tourism situationer in the area and helps determine the level of development that can still be introduced in the site. This includes the present number of tourist facilities (e.g. hotels, inns, homestay), and the tourist statistics in the site. Also included are tourist movement and a study on how the natural resources are currently impacted by tourism.

3. Issues and Concerns to Developing and Sustaining Ecotourism
Developing ecotourism may encounter various challenges that will have to be recognized and properly addressed. These include environmental, social, financial, and institutional issues.

4. Ecotourism Planning for the Site
This takes into consideration all the possible and appropriate development for the ecotourism site. Identified ecotourism products are developed and detailed physical development is formulated.

5. Vision, Goals and Objectives
The Vision Statement will help others to understand what is to be achieved. A clearly defined vision will guide the work ahead. Goals and objectives should be derived from the more general goals and objectives of the Protected Area Management Plan.

B. Component Strategies

The component strategies for the Ecotourism Management Plan consist of: 1) Zoning for Visitor Use; 2) Visitor Site Planning and Design; 3) Sustainable Infrastructure Design; 4) Visitor Management; and 5) Revenue generation.

1. Zoning for Visitor Use
Zoning is the division of the area into different zones for the purpose of distributing different types of use or non-use in the most appropriate places (Drumm et al). The number and types of zones depend on the following:
    a. Management objectives and priorities of the site

b. Quality and variety of the natural and cultural resources and the degree of alteration they have suffered

c. Types of use that have been planned

Each zone shall be managed to maintain a particular natural setting within which ecotourism and other activities take place, and each zone has its own set of rules and regulation for activities carried out within its boundaries.

Planning for ecotourism activities should consider the types of visitors that usually visit the protected area. Although in general, the protected area caters to all types of visitors and the facilities in the area are geared towards basic visitor demands. However, ecotourism activities in the protected area should be low impact and well managed. Usually, protected areas have a zone dedicated for public use - this is the multiple use zone.

Steps in zoning the protected area are the following.

i. The first step is to determine areas suitable for ecotourism within the multiple use zone of protected areas. Examples of sub zones could be: administration area, parking area, camping sites, viewing areas, etc.

ii. On a base map of the protected area, locate the specific ecotourism attractions and infrastructure, as well as those sensitive and fragile areas. Indicate where the trails, viewing areas, camping sites, visitor center, guard stations, eco-lodges are supposed to be located. Avoid locating these ecotourism activities in sensitive and fragile areas and geologically hazardous areas; there should be a considerable distance from them.

iii. Verify the locations by actual site visits.

iv. Prepare a preliminary zoning map, indicating the recommendations for visitor use. Consider the flow of visitors given the proposed zoning map.

v. Finalize the zoning map by describing each zone according to the "zone attributes."
   a. Biophysical attributes: what are the biophysical limitations/ sensitivities?
   b. Social attributes: what are the visitor group sizes, number of groups per day, types of use permitted in the zone?
   c. Administrative attributes: what levels of protection and management in each zone, and the rules and management actions?

vi. The zones should be finalized on the map with the following:
   a. Name of zone- which describes the type of activity permitted in the zone
   b. General objective- what sort of ecotourism experience is provided in the zone
   c. Zone description- a summary of the biophysical, social and administrative attributes
   d. Zone boundaries- describe the locations of the zone, giving precise boundaries

vii. Formulate the management rules, regulations and policies for these zones. These must be communicated to the visitors as rules for visitors. Define the rules and regulations that will apply to the specific visitor sites and zones.

The result of the zoning shall be the basis for selecting and designating Tourism Enterprise Zones (TEZs) as provided for in the Tourism Act.

2. *Visitor Site Planning*

Visitor use should be concentrated in only a few locations of the protected area, usually called visitor sites. This is to facilitate management, and limit the impact on the natural environment. It is important that these "visitor sites" be well planned.

After zoning for an area has been established, site plans should be prepared. It is best to involve landscape architects for the task.

Good visitor site planning should aim for:
  a. Efficient use of space by locating infrastructure in places where it will be most easily, safely and effectively used by visitors, protected area employees and site managers.
  b. Minimal impact on the surrounding environment
  c. Planning infrastructure in accordance with the determined capacity of the protected area to receive a definite number of visitors.

Site planning requires the preparation of an actual plan and topographic map on which all existing planned ecotourism infrastructure is placed, such as eco-lodges, trails, campsite, visitor center, or toilet facilities. Site planning will require the services of professional landscape architect and other specialists.

Site development process:
  i. Review of the Protected Area Management Plan
  ii. Establishment of the boundaries of the site
  iii. Conduct of topographic survey
  iv. Locating significant features (vegetation, rivers, structures, etc.) on the topographic map.
  v. Investigation of soil conditions and bearing capacities for buildings

Specific considerations in site planning should include:
  i. Capacity: determine limits based on site sensitivity
  ii. Density: limits for development and human activity
  iii. Slopes: steep slopes should be avoided
  iv. Vegetation: retain as much native vegetation to secure the integrity of the site. Avoid landscaping, use of exotic species, use of lawns
  v. Wildlife should not be disturbed or threatened especially nesting sites
  vi. Views should be maximized, buildings blend with views
  vii. Natural hazards: development should avoid areas with natural hazards
  viii. Energy and utilities: natural lighting and ventilation, use of environmentally appropriate waste technologies
  ix. Safe and efficient use of water resources, including rainwater, through the use of rainwater catchments)
  x. Visitor circulation systems (lodging and trails should optimize visitor movement, minimum disturbance to sensitive areas and wildlife corridors, low impact).

3. *Sustainable Infrastructure Design*

Infrastructure in protected areas should blend with the surroundings. Once the site plan is complete, next is the design of infrastructure such as trails, campgrounds, eco-lodges, and other support systems. This is a job that should be entrusted to a licensed architect who understands the importance of harmonizing design with ecological processes and natural beauty.

Overall building design philosophy should be: *Sustainable design minimizes environmental impacts, use of non-natural materials, and the production of waste. Development should be done with use of natural materials, use of renewable energy, and proper management of waste.*

The ecotourism standards issued by NEDC/NESC for eco-facilities and eco-lodges and DAO 2009-09 (Standard Designs and Specifications of Signs, Facilities and Other Infrastructure that may be Installed and/or Constructed within Protected Areas) should be followed.

4. Visitor Management

A. Strategies for visitor management include the following:

1. Reduction of area by:
   a. Limiting number of visitors to entire area
   b. Limiting length of stay
   c. Encouraging use of other areas
   d. Requiring certain skills or equipment
   e. Charging higher visitor fee
   f. Making access more difficult

2. Reduction of problem areas by:
   a. Informing visitors of constraints in area and discourage use of area
   b. Limiting number of visitors
   c. Making it more difficult to go there
   d. Eliminating facilities
   e. Establishing skills and equipment requirements
   f. Charging different visitors fees

3. Modification of location of use within problem areas by:
   a. Discouraging camping or use
   b. Encouraging camping only at certain areas
   c. Locating facilities in non-problematic sites
   d. Concentrating use on sites through facility design
   e. Discouraging off-trail travel
   f. Segregating types of visitors

4. Modification of timing of use by:
   a. Encouraging use outside of peak periods
   b. Discouraging use when potential impact is high
   c. Charging fees during periods of high use or impact potential

5. Modification of type of use and visitor behavior by:
   a. Discouraging/prohibiting damaging practices and behavior
   b. Teaching correct ecotourism ethics
   c. Requiring certain group size
   d. Requiring use of guide
   e. Discouraging use of animal transport
   f. Discouraging radios and noisy equipment
   g. Prohibiting pets
   h. Discouraging overnight use

6. Modification of visitor expectation by:
   a. Informing about appropriate uses
   b. Informing about conditions to expect

7. Increasing the resistance of the resource
   a. Using fences and natural barriers
   b. Strengthening the site (tent platforms, paved trails, etc.)

B. Methods of visitor management can be direct and indirect.
   1. Direct methods include:
      a. Environmental education/interpretation
      b. Information
      c. Site management
      d. Zoning
      e. Infrastructure and facility design
      f. Maintenance
      g. Ease or difficulty of access

   2. Indirect methods include:
      a. Fees and costs
      b. Restrictions
      c. Patrolling
      d. Requirement of certain skills
      e. Permits and licenses
      f. Designation of sites
      g. Trained guides
      h. Rules and regulations

5. Revenue Generation

Mechanisms for generating revenue include: entrance fees, user fees, licenses and permits, sales and concessions. Determining fees in protected areas shall be in accordance with DAO No. 2000-51 (Guidelines and Principles in Determining Fees for Access to and Sustainable Use of Resources in Protected Areas), and corresponding Manual for the Implementation of the Fee System Guidelines in Protected Areas.

a. Entrance fees are collected for entrance to the protected area.
b. User fees are exacted for use of specific facilities such as cottages, picnic tables, parking, camping, etc.
c. Licenses and permits are charged to tour operators to allow them to manage visitors in the protected area.
d. Sales involve third parties or the protected area administration that may sell souvenirs, food and other products in the protected area. For third parties, a percentage should be collected by the protected area administration, as determined and agreed in the contract.
e. Concessions are available to third parties intending to provide services to visitors in the site such as: lodging, food services, guided tours, boat or other transportation, etc. Selection of third party concessionaires shall be carried out through a bidding process following government rules and regulations.

C. Formulation of the Ecotourism Management Plan

The formulation of the Ecotourism Management Plan should be consistent with the existing Protected Area Management Plan and in accordance with the following outline. Planning for the ecotourism development and management of an area shall be participatory, involving all concerned stakeholders including women's groups.

ECOTOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN OUTLINE

I. Existing Situation
1. Area Physical Profile
2. Location / Area
3. Climate
4. Geological Characteristics
5. Demography
6. Existing Infrastructure
7. Utilities
8. Transportation
II. Tourism Profile
1. Natural Resource Base
a. Natural ecosystems (forests, caves, mangroves, rivers, etc.)
b. Attractions (scenic areas, waterfalls, etc.)
c. Natural Resources (flora and fauna; water resources, etc.)
2. Cultural Resource Base
a. Cultural, historical, archaeological sites
b. Festivals and Events
c. Indigenous/ ethnic cultures
3. Market Analysis
a. International Tourist Arrivals
b. International Visitor Profile (DOT statistics)
c. Domestic Tourism Segments
o *Families*
o *Students*
d. International Tourism Segments
o *Balikbayan*
o *Package Tours*
o *Free and Independent Tourists (FIT)*
o *Scuba Diving*
e. Other special interest travelers
4. Tourism Marketing
a. Government marketing
b. Private sector marketing
c. Ecotourism marketing
5. Transport
a. Air
b. Water
c. Land
6. Accommodation
7. Tourism Services
a. Facilities
b. Support services
c. Utilities
d. Communication
e. General tourist information
f. Rescue and medical services

g. Security
8. Human Resources Development
a. *Employment by sector*
b. *Training needs*
c. *Trainings available*
9. Issues / impacts
a. *Environmental*
b. *Social*
c. *Economic*
d. *Institutional*
III. Plan
1. Vision
2. Goals and Objectives
3. Strategies / Programs / Projects
4. Site Plan and Zoning
5. Visitor Management Plan
6. Site Activity Management
7. Opportunities for Ecotourism (including business)
8. Capacity Building
9. Marketing and Promotion
10. Institutional Arrangements
11. Action Plan
12. Monitoring and Evaluation

ANNEX C

BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

The general process of business planning includes:

1. Selecting types of ecotourism enterprises
   a. Community based ecotourism enterprises
   b. Private sector concessions (tour operators, accommodations, food)
   c. NGO/Private sector partnership
   d. NGO ecotourism enterprises
   e. NGO/community/private sector partnership
   f. LGU/community partnership
   g. Others like women's groups, indigenous peoples, out-of-school-youth, etc.

2. Business plan preparation

The Ecotourism Business Plan should include, but will not be limited by the following outline:
   a. Executive Summary which contains the highlights of the Business plan.
   b. Product or Services Description, which contains the details of the services or products offered and the Mission Statement for the business.
   c. Industry Analysis, which is an assessment of the standards, trends and characteristics of the ecotourism industry in the area.
   d. Marketing Strategy which is a description of target markets, estimation of market size, and number of visitors expected, including details of promotional and sales activities
   e. Management and Organization, which is an overview of business structure, including key positions and descriptions.
   f. Financial Projections, which will reflect historical, current and projected financial data.
   g. Monitoring and Evaluation. which will include indicators and method of monitoring.