

# BUTUAN CITY

## TOURISM MASTER PLAN

### 2014-2020

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

Butuan City is endowed with endemic historical and cultural heritage. While it is home to boat shrines, archeological museums, old church ruins, cultural village, ancient burial grounds, and undisturbed artifacts, it is also the site of the first Christian Mass. Gifted with natural attractions/destinations like the Mt. Mayapay range, caves, waterfalls, rivers, creeks/waterways, parks and state of the art bridge infrastructure, Butuan is also strategically located. It serves as the gateway to the developed tourism destinations of Surigao, Davao and Cagayan de Oro Cities as well as the provinces in the Northeastern and Western Mindanao.

All these natural and cultural attractions of high tourism potentials that is inherent to the city has not yet been optimally exploited to generate a significant impact to the city's economic growth and productivity. The city receives a relatively small number of tourist arrivals for international tourists as against other big cities in Mindanao. Based on the 2012 report from the Department of Tourism (DOT)-13, Butuan City only received 12,784 international tourists for said year as against those received by Davao and Cagayan de Oro Cities. Although the city ranks first in Caraga Region for foreign visitors' arrival, still, the city must intensify its *marketing efforts, product availability and use of its competitive advantages to gain a good standing in international, if not, national tourism.*

The picture of the city's socio-economic condition wherein a high percentage of Butuan City's residents are poor is alarming which stands at 26.70% or an equivalent of 17,159 households up against its total of 64,266

households. This figure calls for a priority attention and action through strategic interventions to support and be mutually supported, by tourism.

Pronouncedly, one of the key strategies is through tourism sector development: that is to improve opportunities for visitor-focused employment and community –based livelihood to elevate income; generate taxes; and move for the promotion of the city’s business investment climate. This will only materialize if tourism development interventions be prioritized, hence, given a larger share in the LGU’s budget allocations, increased private sector participation and placed under the close watch and at the heart of a strong coordination among concerned agencies.

The Butuan City Tourism Office as the LGU’s frontline agency is encouraged to create an enabling tourism environment for a robust tourism development to take place. Such a development must be anchored on sustainable practices by internal and local key-players cultivating conduits from among its various external key stakeholders. This also includes institution of deliberate efforts for inclusive growth so that results are felt not only by development managers at the city level but by the majority of its residents including those of the disadvantaged sector and remote rural communities.

The implementation of the 2014-2020 Butuan City Tourism Master Plan (BCTMP) must also follow the path by which its development was undertaken – one that coordinates, synchronizes and unifies efforts under its different travel and tourism industry stakeholders. This approach is vital because more than consistency in crafting and implementation, this document also provides strategic direction and guide to grow and develop tourism in the City where each sector must find its specific place and value. Subsequently, the concerted and exhaustive participation among stakeholders is foreseen to optimize the city’s endemic potentials for tourism and increase its contribution to the growth and development of the local economy as well as that of the country.

## 1.1 Environmental Characteristics:

The City of Butuan is a tropical city and has two (2) seasons - the dry and rainy seasons. The dry season can be felt in the months of March to August, while the rainy season from the month of September to February.

Butuan has a flat and below sea level surface which is approximately .02 meters that is endowed with many creeks, lagoons and estuaries complemented with swamplands near its coastal area. These swamp areas are interconnected with the waterways joined by the Agusan River. Most of the swamplands are actually mangroves that served as habitat to different marine species.

The biggest mountain around the city is Mount Mayapay where mountain adventure, hiking/trekking and other ecology-based tourism takes place. It produces birds, wild animals and insects as well as endemic flora of interest.

Butuan City is located in the central portion of the Province of Agusan del Norte in Northern Mindanao. It lies at 8044' and 9003' latitude, and 125026' and 125043' longitude. It is bounded on the North by the Butuan Bay, on the west by the Municipality of Buenavista, on the East by Municipality of RTR and on the South by the Municipality of Las Nieves.

Fig.001 Map Showing Butuan City in the Philippines:



Fig.002 Map Showing Butuan in Mindanao:



Fig.003 Map Showing Butuan in Caraga Region:



## 1.2 Socio-economic Characteristics:

Butuan City is a Highly Urbanized City in the Philippines and is also the regional center of Caraga. The name "Butuan" is believed to have originated from the sour fruit, *batuan*. Other etymology sources say that it comes from a certain "*Datu Buntuan*", a chieftain who once ruled over Butuan. There are also many derivations such as "*But-ar'*", a responsible person; "*Butwa-ar'*", a place to converge and separate (market trade or fish net to catch fish), and "*Baotoar'*", a place to build ships. So much debate as to the exact origin of Butuan has been raised while reigning above all is the claim that 'in the beginning there

was no Philippines, but there was Butuan.” Historical accounts provided that long before the Philippines traded as a nation, already, Butuan did, as an ancient kingdom, an ancient nation duly recognized by the ancient kingdoms of China and India.

Butuan City stood as the capital of the Province of Agusan del Norte until year 2000 when Republic Act 8811 transferred the capital to Cabadbaran City. Of late, it stands as the regional center of Caraga.

Butuan City has a land area of 81,728 hectares, which is roughly 4.1% of the total area of the Caraga Region. With an estimated total population of 319,568,(NSO-2010) it has an average density of 394.6/km<sup>2</sup> (1,022/sq mi) three times higher than the regional average density of 101 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. Population is projected to double in the next 10 years with an annual growth rate of 3.8%.

The city’s poor stands at 26.70%, a little better than the national rate of 27.6 but too high if ranged against the benchmark of within 7-10 percent for highly urbanized cities. It is also behind the poverty incidence target supported by the United Nations to reduce which is roughly 15 percent by the year 2015. The present poverty incidence is equivalent to 17,159 of the city’s 64,266 households not earning the monthly poverty threshold income of Php 7,821 a month or Php 93,852 a year (i.e. per Congressional Executive Legislative Agenda, CELA, 2013 Report).

On an economic scale, addressing the issues associated with small-scale resources is critical to poverty eradication. The city’s economy heavily depends on smallholder farming and services. There is a need to address this concern by increasing the value of smallholder farming and services and enlarging the scales of development/opportunities for the same population through tourism industry expansion. As catalyst to this projected change, growth in travel and

tourism is envisioned to be largely inclusive of the target population, specifically those residing in the rural communities.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

The process of formulating the Butuan City Tourism Master Plan (2014-2020) required a number of steps in a series of Strategic Planning Workshops -a multi-sectoral collaboration among private and public stakeholders. The first step involves the validation of natural and cultural tourism resources in Butuan City followed by the conduct of SWOT Analysis which highlighted pride of place, access & connectivity and destination attractiveness. The third step involved the conduct of a Value Chain Analysis.

The total situational analysis was subsequently followed by the crafting of the tourism Goals and Objectives. Environmental considerations were highly placed in Tourism Development Planning - Framing of Objectives, Targets and Strategies/Policies Formulation, Identification of Investment Opportunities in Butuan, Inputs on Private-Public Partnership and lastly, the Identification of Programs, Projects, Activities, and the Tourism Master Plan Complementary Action Plan.

## **3.0 SUPPLY ANALYSIS**

The key purpose of this section is to provide a summary of the current status of the tourism industry in Butuan City and an analysis of the same to further define its competitiveness for tourism. Through the analysis of the city's current tourism status, planners will be able to unfold the requisites for growth in travel and tourism as well as the necessary steps that must be taken to meet the overall objectives of the Tourism Master Development Plan.



### 3.1 Cultural Tourism Attractions

Butuan City has a very rich cultural heritage rooted in its five hundred years of existence and expressly translated in the city tourism marketing tagline that says, " In the beginning there was no Philippines, but there was Butuan."

One of the tourism products that sparks like wild fire is the discovery of the Balangay Boats which is considered as a " Cultural Mine" in Asia according to the UNESCO. But, despite having such significant cultural, historical and liberating potential, products related thereto are largely undeveloped.

The low prioritization to the archaeological finds is further exacerbated by the deterioration of the same artifacts due to indifference of our locals to our own heritage as well as the exploitation by different opportunists on such archaeological abundance, given that some tourism sites are privately owned, hence, gave opportunity to massive selling of artifacts to private collectors.

Other factors include the laxity of enforcement and inadequacy of tourism laws and ordinances which resulted to the non-protection, and non-preservation of cultural heritage zones and structures at the sites. Moreover, the host communities with little or no knowledge of the Butuan History manifest a loss in faith and pride to preserve and conserve these national treasures.

Also, support facilities and programs are inadequate on alternate tourist destinations, pronouncedly, the infrastructure facility, so that road networks to and from potential tourism destinations are poor.

Similarly, the highest in potential as a tourism resource has yet to be developed. The navigable Agusan River as the fluid highway that connected us to the rest of the world centuries ago for trade and commerce has yet to be re-constructed to serve the same purpose. Siltation and birth of new river circuits has somehow altered the accessibility of the river way.

Lastly, as a simple yet basic accessibility tool, signage/directional markers for tourism must be installed as well as to make information available to tourists through the sustainable operation of tourism assistance centers. The workshop proposed for the enactment of a City Signage Policy. The tourism signage should be coordinated and standardized with the use of symbols and colors depicting the city's history and cultural heritage. The availability of signage map is also a come-on to show tourists key products in the area.

The city's attractions/destinations as accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT), includes:

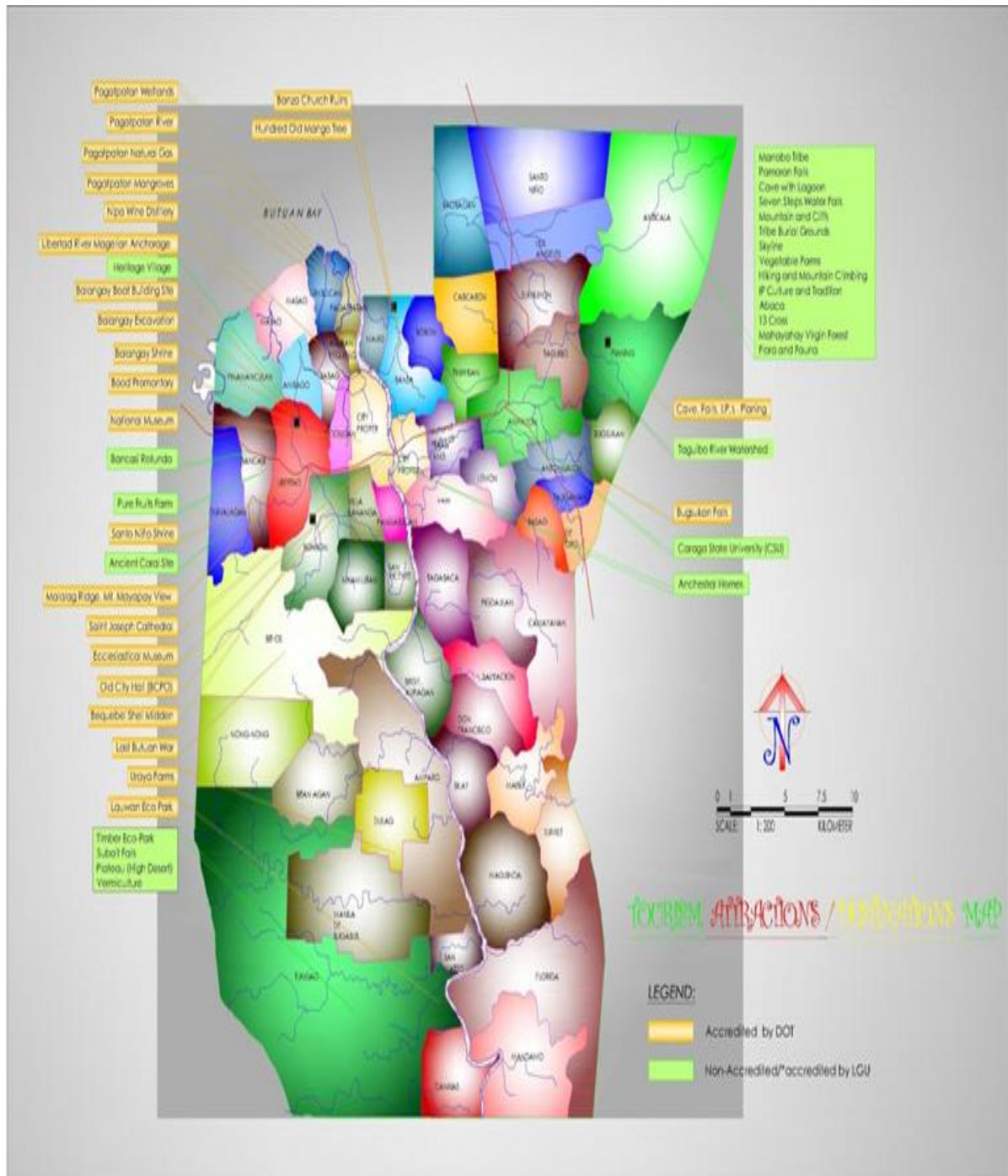
- Balangay Boat Building Site
- BalangayBoats Excavation
- Balangay Shrine, Libertad
- Banza Church Ruins
- Bequibel Shell Midden
- Bood Promontory – Pinamanculan
- Butuan National Museum
- Guingona Park
- St.Joseph Cathedral
- Sto.Nino Basilica Shrine
- Agusan River
- Magellan Anchorage, Masao
- Mt. Mayapay
- Libertad River
- FSUU
- Bugsukan Falls
- Ancestral House
- Gabaldon School Building (ButuanCity Educational School & Agusan National High School)

Other potential natural and cultural tourism sites in Butuan City includes:

- Cave, Falls and Indigenous People in Brgy. Pianing;
- Ecclesiastical Museum;
- Hundred Years Old Mango Tree in Brgy. Ambago;
- Last Butuan War Zone in Brgy. Bit-os;
- Lawaan Eco-Tourism Park in Brgy. Tungao;
- Libertad-Pinamanculan-Masao River;
- Malalag Ridge;
- Mayapay Falls;
- Nipa Wine Distillery;
- Old City Hall (BCPO);
- Brgy. Pagatpatan Mangrove;
- Brgy. Pagatpatan Natural Gas;
- Brgy. Pagatpatan River;
- Brgy. Pagatpatan Wetlands;
- Uraya Farm in Brgy. Dulag;
- Manobo Tribe in Brgy. Anticala;
- Pamorrón Falls;
- Cave with Lagoon;
- 7 steps Water falls;
- Mountains and Cliffs;
- Tribal Burial Grounds;
- Skyline Basket
- Vegetable Farms
- Hiking and Mountain Climbing
- IP Culture and Tradition
- Abaca
- 13 Cross in Purok Mahayahay
- Virgin Forest
- Flora and Fauna
- NGCP Lagoon in Brgy. Bit-os

- Delta Discovery Park
- Sprinkles in Brgy. Kinamlutan

Fig.004 Map Showing the Existing and Potential Tourism Attractions:



While Butuan City boasts of cultural and religious museums, it is also home to a number of monuments and other cultural and heritage - based attractions. The city has yet to make use of its competitive advantage in terms of historical and political heritage.

This is particularly important in the sense that the development of cultural and heritage products can contribute significantly to the inclusion of more rural areas in the tourism industry. To gain more depth and root in the forthcoming generations, it will be a wise investment to incorporate the Butuan History, folklore, songs and dances, arts and crafts, and native dialect in the school curriculum.

In contrast, other cities in Mindanao have better tourism policies and sound proposals that were effectively implemented. Also, they have better incentives for tourism businesses.

The BCTMP must also address the protection and conservation of cultural heritage sites in the formulation of its Zoning Ordinances.

Butuan City has a leverage over other highly urbanized cities in Mindanao in terms of peace and order situation where the City is generally peaceful.

During the conduct of consultations among the different tourism stakeholders, majority of the participants focused their attention to highly politicized concerns with tourism products ranking low in their ladder of priorities. Some participants who are leaders in their community lack appreciation to tourism opportunities as well as in the sustainability of implemented tourism programs and projects. Participants attribute this low appreciation to the absence of Tourism Investment Promotions and lack of enforcement of policies for tourism standards under the Tourism Act of 2009.

Some of the Indigenous People (IP's) at the tourism areas are cooperative as host but are more concerned with the changes in climate brought forth by environmental degradation as well as in the preservation of their ancestral homes. The IPs must critically be included in the planning and implementation of tourism endeavors for them to be made significant contributors in the city's growth and development.

*Interventions are urgently needed to develop attractions that form the "supply" aspect of the city's tourism industry which at present is at a critical level. In particular, product development is required around the cultural and historical heritage of the city to draw more tourists in the locality.*

While the city is underway in "shaping" its tourism industry, hosting of events that create season-linked market for the tourism sector has established a number of festivals, an important draw card for tourism in the city. These include:

- Abayan Festival
- Balangay Festival
- Kahimunan Festival
- Lumbia Festival
- Balangay Theater Floats
- Adlaw Hong Butuan
- Light-up Butuan (Festival of Lights)

The Balangay and Kahimunan festivals are contemplated to execute a marketing plan and strategy that is at par with, if not more than the other festivals of Cebu or Bacolod Cities such as the Sinulog and Maskarra festivals, respectively.

Other subjects remain untapped as tourism products for heritage such as "Iconic Products" of the city, being the birth place of heroes and heroines.

The most notable of which is Datu Silongan, being the first Datu of Old Butuan and the first Governor of Agusan; the first Congresswoman Hon. Elisa R. Ochoa; and Congressman Marcos M. Calo, Father of chartered Butuan City, to name a few.

### **3.2 Tourism Front liners and Service Providers**

Presently, there are 16 operators for Travel and Tour Services and Ticketing Offices, Tour Guide and Travel Agents in the city. Most of these establishments are Department of Tourism(DOT) accredited Tourist Guides and Tour Operators.

While some of the concerns of service providers include the insufficient information on local tourism activities as well as in the aspect of coordination among stakeholders for the same, observably, services offered by the operators are not standardized. There is therefore a dearth in standardizing the quality of tourism services in the locality with some of the tour operators, running without accreditation. As a flourishing trade, it is best that this need be addressed at once before it gets out of hand.

For accommodations available in the city, there are 54 business establishments comprised of inns, hostels, lodging houses, dormitories and hotels with a combined total of 1,389 rooms, 2,261 beds and 627 extra beds.

Although the registration of Tourism Related Establishments (TREs) in the city is operationalized at the level of business permit issuance, there has yet to be a system of assessing, monitoring and ensuring compliance with standards and quality controls that is important to ensuring that tourists have a quality experience while staying in the city. While the DOT Region XIII accredits TREs, the LGU must also assert itself and strongly participate on this shared responsibility of installing standards of operation given that the region

has a minimal staff complement with the LGU receiving the brunt of complaints from tourists.

At present, the LGU does not have a clear accreditation system that allows operation of TREs not accredited by the DOT but, is aspiring to be one. This is a critical stage in standards-setting for this may facilitate or arrest the upgrading process of accreditation that translates into quality service.

With this scenario, it is difficult to get a comprehensive picture of accommodation supply in the city, meaning that a supply/demand analysis is difficult to undertake. The situational analysis therefore had to make use of assumptions and other sources to assess product supply. The total available beds in Butuan City are available only due to the registration of business establishments. But as to the accreditation of tourism establishments before the City Tourism Office, mechanisms are not yet clear.

Food and Beverage. Butuan City also boasts of food and beverage services established by 74 fast-food stores/chains, 24 Restaurants, a couple of Pubs, 15 Bars, 7 coffee shops and 25 catering services. Although some of these are accredited by the City Tourism Office, still the cleanliness and neatness, safety of food products of the establishments are not regularly monitored by the City Health Office as the main implementing agency. Moreover, *there is no deliberate effort to enjoin these establishments in offering attractions, entertainment, native delicacies and food that are uniquely Butuan to both local and foreign visitors.*

Air Transport. The city's mode of accessibility for Air Transportation is served by the Butuan National Airport which caters 5 to 10 flights daily by aircrafts from Cebu Pacific and Philippine Airlines. The flight route is Butuan-Cebu, vice-versa and Butuan-Manila, vice-versa. A major renovation is already undertaken at the airport facilities to ensure the comfort and convenience of the flying public. The runway has become safer now due to its extension. The



installation of the night landing facilities has added night flight options to the public and further gained positive feedbacks.

**Land Transport.** For land transportation, the main modes of transportation within the city proper are the "orange" tricycle, taxi, and small-type jeepneys or multicab. Vans, buses and jeepneys are also available for trips to neighboring towns, cities and provinces.

*The City's road network has substantially improved like the upgrade into four (4) lanes for the city's national highway. The city's strategic main roads and streets, on the other hand, are laden with potholes due to wear and tear. The roads were constructed from a good 20 to 30 years back. The streets in downtown area are relatively small and needs urban renewal. The city should also provide bike and pedestrian lanes to the same streets.*

**Seaport and Sea Transport.** Likewise, seaport and transportation for passenger and cargo alike is served by the Nasipit Port of Agusan del Norte for domestic passengers and international cargo vessel. It is 28 kilometers away from the City while two (2) secondary ports, the Masao Port at Brgy. Lumbucan and the Butuan Port Terminal caters only to cargo services. *Butuan City should pursue to construct the Butuan major seaport at the mouth of Agusan River near Brgys. Masao and Pagatpatan areas.*

**Adventure Sports Services.** The City offers the Delta Discovery Park, a newly opened zip-line amusement park. Delta Discovery Park is located at Brgy. Bonbon, Butuan City, a hidden paradise at the heart of the city. This is also known as the longest zip-line in Mindanao and in Asia with a length of 1.3 kilometers. Of late, an eight (8)- hole golf course owned by the West Highlands of the A -Brown Company s being operated at Barangay Bonbon.

For event organizing, dozens of individuals and groups are willing to be tapped for weddings, events, concerts and other special occasions.

Tourism Estate Management Services. For this category, there are eight (8) major shops and malls/department stores operating in the city such as Asia Link Central Mall, Gaisano Mall Butuan, PS Arcade, Puregold, Robinson's Place, Unicity, Unitop General Merchandise. SM City Butuan will be constructed soon within the year.

Sports and Recreation Center. For the Butuan City Sports and Recreational Centers, the city is presently utilizing the FSUU and CSU gyms for big sports events and gatherings like PBA Exhibitions and other National and Local Competition. Likewise, the Butuan City Sports Complex in Brgy. Libertad, is utilized for various sports tournaments and events. Hopefully with the near completion of the Butuan City Polysports Complex and Recreational Center in 2014, Butuan can bid to be host of big events like the "PalarongPambansa". The center consists of 4,000 - seater football main bleacher, 4,000 - seater basketball gymnasium, football grass field, and a rubberized track oval. Phase II will consist of 2nd main bleacher, Olympic-size swimming pool, and baseball/softball field and bleacher. Other privately-owned badminton courts , bowling lanes and sports bar are also operating in the city.

Establishments for Wellness. There are 71 business establishments operating for Health, Beauty and Wellness Services to the public. Affordable rates are being offered alongside modern amenities. *The need of adequate world class amenities such as bathrooms and spas should be installed to these facilities to facilitate the long-standing clamor of foreign visitors.*

Museums and Galleries. For City Museums and Galleries Heritage Museum, the City offers the old relics of religious items at the St. Joseph Cathedral Museum, the National Museum of Archeology and Artifacts in Brgy. Doongan, the Balangay Boat Shrine in Brgy. Libertad, and Manobo Tribal House at Barangay San Mateo. *Due to the effects of wear and tear to these museums, timely repair and rehabilitation is called for to draw in more visitors. Although*

*trivial, presentable comfort rooms are also being asked for by visitors. Presently, the Butuan National Museum is undergoing renovation. A maritime museum is also considered to be built since the existing site for the reconstructed Balangay boat named, "Masawa Hong Butuan" is currently on display at Barangay Bading and needs to be transferred at once to safeguard its wear and tear and of course the other excavated balangay boats in Brgy. Libertad known as the " Mother Boat Balangay".*

Parks and Recreation. The city has for its parks and recreation the following: the Bood Promontory Eco Park, the historic hill believed to have been the site where Magellan and his men celebrated the first Catholic Mass on Philippine soil and erected a cross when he landed in Mazaua on March 31, 1521. The highest elevation nearest to the seaside village of present day Masao, Bood is a wooded area located at a bend in the Masao River (El Rio de Butuan), Barangay Pinamanculan; the Guingona Park formerly named Rizal Park is located in front of the St. Joseph Cathedral which draws domestic tourists. *However, the city lacks more parks and recreations centers where its own people and visitors flock around to experience the joys brought forth by activities that may be done in a fresh, clean and open field.*

Convention Centers. There are three (3) major convention centers operating in Butuan City namely: Dotties' Place, Balangay Convention Center, and Almont Inland Hotel and Resort. The seating capacity is between 1,000 to 3,000 seats for large gatherings. There are also medium convention centers operating in the city such as the Lucianna Inn & Convention Center, Prince Hotel and Convention, the Royal Plaza, Budget Foods and others.

Performing Arts. The city could tap the services of the Agusan National High School-Special Program for the Arts (ANHS-SPA), the Butuan Central Elementary School (BCES), the Father Saturnino Urios University (FSUU), and other universities and schools in promoting cultural and ethnic dances such as the dances of the Manobo Tribe. Other private performers can be tapped like

the CSN, BANCA, KKPI and BBPE. A new addition is the introduction of the anime' culture by the youth which gained recognition and popularity in the national capital and even international scene. Painters, arts and crafts enthusiasts are also gaining importance both in the local and national arena by gaining recognition and drawing huge crowds for followers.

### **3.3 Other Tourism Support Facilities**

**Financial Institutions.** There are thirty (30) private and three (3) government banks that cater to the financial needs of the city. For fast transactions, there are 33 private and public banks operating Automated Telling Machines. There are also several money changers, money transfer facilities and pawnshop establishments operating in the city.

**Credit Card Facilities.** On availability of credit card facilities, there are several private banks and company who are catering this service in the city.

**Entrance Fees.** Assigning entrance fees for tourist spots for the purpose of maintenance, only the Butuan National Museum is charging a minimal fee for maintenance cost to cover for those incurred during its operation - all the others are open for free.

**Health Establishments.** For hospitals, there are seven(7) public and private hospitals operating in the City which includes: the Agusan del Norte Provincial Hospital, Butuan Doctors Hospital, Butuan Maternity Birthing Clinic, Butuan Medical Center, Elisa R. Ochoa Maternity & General Hospital, Holy Child Hospital and Manuel J. Santos Hospital. Although major hospitals have modern equipment installed in their respective establishments, *there persists the need to upgrade the hospitals to conform to world standards as well as to make available necessary specializations of medical practitioners to be at par with other highly –urbanized cities in Mindanao.*

Communications Facilities. For telecommunications/ ICTs, there are three (3) telephone companies operating in the city, namely: Bayantel, PLDT and Cruztelco.

On mobile telecommunications, present in the city is the operation of three(3) mobile communications companies: the Globe Telecom, Smart Communications and Sun Cellular. All of these mobile communication line can access to internet, social networking and visibility in the internet world.

For cable companies, five(5) cable firms serve the city, namely: Signal Digital TV, Dream Satellite TV, FilProducts (Phil. Products Cable), Sky Cable, and Zenergy Cable(PECBC).

There are twenty (20) Gasoline Stations running in the city brought forth by the increasing volume of vehicles registered. Some are operating 24 hours.

On Tourism Assistance Centers, the presence of City Tourism Information Centers located at the Butuan National Airport and Butuan City Tourism Office, City Hall significantly help tourism destination awareness. Still the city lacks additional tourism information centers in strategic locations to further result to increased influx of tourist on alternative tourist destinations. It should be established at the bus terminals, parks and ports, and other strategic places.

On Energy, the Agusan Del Norte Electric Cooperative(ANECO) is serving the power supply of whole of Agusandel Norte, the bulk of energy consumption comes from the capital city. However, power interruptions occur and are experienced and sometimes without the provider's warning.

On Water, the Butuan City Water District (**BCWD**) is serving the water consumption of the whole city. At present, *the water supply could not accommodate, let alone, serve the whole city. Gaining regular complaints on*

*this service make water supply a big concern for the industry. However, the introduction of the bulk water system has greatly improved the services making it more reliable even during heavy rains.*

On Logistics/couriers, there are 36 business establishments operating in the city.

### **3.4 Support and Enablers:**

For public institutions, the City Government of Butuan created the Butuan City Tourism Office by Virtue of an SP Ordinance. This is aligned to the provision of the Tourism Act of 2009 that gave parameters for the structure, tasks and responsibilities for the office. *The presence of an active City Tourism Council is a great indication for dynamism, but the term of its membership is co-terminus with that of the city officials. Moreover, there's a need to fully implement the newly created City Tourism Office as a separate department, the filling-up of permanent positions and up-grading of JO personnel to casual plantilla to effectively respond to the growing demands for more tourism services and activities.*

Another untapped potential for tourism is the private sector whose members are willing, given the opportunity, to participate in building an industry that plows back to them its growth returns. This includes the Academe, CARTOGA, CRTIPC, CTC, BACE, Caraga Travel Links, BANCCA, BAHARA and other NGOs.

### **3.5 Human Resource**

The city's human resource boosts with skilled and trained manpower but most of the business establishments do not offer attractive compensation and incentives. Moreover, the safety measures instituted for tourism workforce do not conform to employment/engagement standards (hazard pay, tariff rates,

etc). This is an area that needs addressing more so that there is a presence of available resources, manpower and technology for tourism and promotion that is uniquely Butuan.

There are a few institutions that offer education/training for tourism. These are the FSUU and Holy Child Colleges of Butuan while others offer tourism-related courses. However, for the general public, enrollment to any TESDA offering, be it a tourism - related course, standardization scheme or accreditation, productivity nor employment access has not been thoroughly established due to lack of mechanism bridging quality standards and education to the same. *The city should focus on, coordinate for and monitor tourism skills development and venture into programs that will translate these skills into concrete increases in income.*

### **3.6 Capital Resource**

There are 32 Banks that are willing to finance tourism projects in the city for its huge potential. These financing channels can truly bring about development of new tourism sites and services. However, the “wait and see attitude” of the private investors is still perceived to be a hindrance to such productivity.

*For that, PPP initiatives is an alternative option to entice the entrepreneurs to engage into development of and explore tourism resources and possibly made a tool to access from national and international eco-tourism programs.*

*Some investors lack entrepreneurship due to duplicating tourism services. Some observe that city tourism projects command high business taxes compared to other areas that offer lower.*

### **3.7 Tourism Management Organization and Services**

For Tourism Management Organization and Services, the City has on-site City Tourism Office, City Tourism Council, Museum's Group and in Business, the group of BAHARA and the Butuan City Catering Association that is on the line.

For transportation needs, there are several groups like the MARINA, Magallanes Watercraft Inc., Cabadbaran Van Drivers Operators Association, Inc. (CVODAI), Bayugan Van Drivers Operators Association. Airport Van Group, Nasipit Van Association that can be readily accessed.

There is also the presence of Dispatchers, Drivers, Operators and Cargo Handlers Assoc., Inc. (BDDOCHAI), Caraga Van Assoc. (CAVAN), Federation of Van Transport Association of Caraga (FEVANTRANSC) manning the services in the Bancasi Airport, van and bus terminals.

For information and contacts, the BAOTO, CARTOGA, Caraga Travel Links, DOT, CTO and City Tourism Council are readily available in the city.

For Recreation facilities and services, the Masao Beach Resorts Association, Delta Adventure Park and Butuan City Chamber of Commerce and Industry Foundation, Inc. can be contacted at an instant.



### **3.8 Tourism Marketing**

The marketing of a specific tourism site is crucial to its continued development. It is one of the key strategies that can be employed in a given area to boost the tourism sector. This sector therefore provides a broad overview of the status of marketing tourism in Butuan City, hence, takes a key role in including strategies within the Tourism Master Plan to grow the sector in the city.

The marketing of tourism in the city is undertaken by the City Tourism Council. However, the operation of the body is co-terminous with that of the city officials. This has resulted in uncoordinated and inconsistent efforts to market the city.

*The TMP strategy should focus on massive marketing of the city at three (3) different levels, local, national and international marketing.*

The TMP shall also include a fund for cooperative marketing, leveraging media interest, showcasing the city, getting the big groups to the city, promotional materials as marketing tools are the fundamental to properly divulgate the image and the attractive capacity of the city.

Presently, the tools used to promote the city include the brochures, internet sites, fairs and exhibits and media advertisement.

The internet usage is one of the most popular and relatively easy and cheap way of advertising.

A web site of city tourism should be established, it should not limit with other tourism products in the city, nationally. The city is grossly under marketed.

## **4.0 Tourism Demand Analysis:**

The key purpose of this section is to provide a summary of the current demand of tourism markets in Butuan City and an analysis thereof. Through such an analysis of this current demand, it will be clear what implication to inform and address the overall objectives of the Tourism Master Plan.

### **4.1 Tourism Markets:**

Tourism demand is an important component in assessing the current status of a tourism in the city pinpointing to potential areas of development. The key features of tourism demand for Butuan City are as follows:

In terms of why tourists visit the city, most of the visitors come for the purpose of meetings, conference and exhibits (MICE) and visit local destinations comprising male & female visitors age 25 years old to 60 years old up. While for visiting local destinations the male & female range from 7 years old to 60 years old up. The second major segment of the tourist market is business, for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) focus on mining / Agri-forestry on local products of which are mostly male ranges from 30 years old and 60 years old up, followed by visitors competing in various Sport Tournaments both Local, National & International Competition such as Badminton, Football (soccer), Basketball, Taekwondo, and other of which are mostly male age to 5 years old to 60 years old up.

*The Tourist Master Plan needs to include interventions to grow business tourism to increase the numbers and spending of tourists in the City.*

Other reasons domestic tourists visit to the city, is to visit friends and relatives (VFR). Some travelers in the city travel for holiday reasons. A large number of domestic tourists travel to the city for religious activities also. Business trips and medical reasons, are also relevant. Again, this means that the greatest number of domestic visitors are the ones with the lowest daily spend (P3,000.00 per day), while high value domestic tourists (holiday visitors) spending three times more than VFR visitors, are less frequently to visit the city.

*Interventions are needed in the TMP to grow the market share of high value domestic tourists (holiday and business) through product development, marketing, infrastructure provision, and information services.*

The primary activities undertaken by domestic tourists in the City are around social activities and shopping. This is to be expected, as these are the primary activities undertaken by the VFR market. Less used, are higher value activities such as nature outing, cultural and heritage products, etc.

*The implication of this for the TMP is that the development of such higher value products needs to take place in the context of other interventions, such as marketing and information provision to attract users of these products.*

*Strategies need to be included in the TMP marketing plan to ensure collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to address gaps in product supply, marketing, information available to tourists, and road and transport infrastructure to ensure that the City can capture a greater share of the international tourist and domestic market.*

According to a Tourist Arrival Report based on DOT-13, the foreign tourists visited the city has reached to 8,176, the top 5 Nationalities come from the following:

- USA..... 3,537 or 43%
- Australia.....897 or 11%
- Canada..... 793 or 10%
- Japan..... 657 or 8%
- Korea..... 601 or 7%
- Others..... 1,691 or 21%

*The TMP should focus on marketing, product development and information provision to ensure that the city can increase its market share of international tourists.*

While for domestic tourists, it register to 245,537 visitors coming from different parts of the country, large chunk goes to Caraga Cities & Provinces, second from the Regions of Mindanao (mostly from region 10 & 11), followed by Regions of Visayas (mostly from Region 7) and Regions of Luzon (mostly from NCR)

In 2010, based from the Department of Tourism (DOT-13), the City received 215,766 and 241,402 respectively of foreign and domestic visitors entering Butuan City, meaning that significant opportunity exists to grow the number of international travelers visiting the City. The number was further increased to 241,402 in 2011.

This is particularly significant as Butuan has extensive activities on cultural and historical heritage, which are the top two(2) activities foreign tourists engage in when visiting Butuan.

This points to significant gaps in either marketing, product development or other factors. The City has the potential to become one of the most visited City in the country, but a significant amount of action is required by all stakeholders to achieve this.

*There should a TMP marketing plan to ensure collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to address gaps in product supply, marketing, information available to tourists, and road and transport infrastructure to ensure that the City can capture a greater share of the international tourist market.*

The City will focused on capturing international tourists through three key markets: leisure, business travel and event marketing. Interventions in marketing the City must be structured around core, target and tactical markets to maintain the current market, and to draw new markets to the City. Also, offering of cultural and historical events as a different experience like having immersion in Butuanon culture is one of the strategies.

As to what attracted them to the community, they pinpoint this to our Hospitality & Friendly people, Business Opportunities, Local Products, Local Destinations and Labor & Manpower.

Their access is via on Social Networking, Tri-Media (print, radio, TV), Word of Mouth, Friends & Relatives, Convention Biddings, Investment Promotions and Tourism Trade Missions.

As to the level of satisfaction with our offerings, the city is rated the average of 7.5% from the scale of 1 as the worst and 10 as the best.

The most frequent places visited by visitors for tourism related establishments for their accommodations are Wellness, Bars &

Restaurants, MICE facilities, Business, Malls, money transfers, hospitals, banks, telecommunications and transportation through Land ,Sea, and Air.

Other reasons are that our people are hospitable, friendly & generous. They also cite unique City's History & Archaeology, Waterways and Agusan River. Also their attendance to concerts & events and visits to local farms & homes are among the reasons for their travel.

## **5.0 Analysis of Tourism demand and supply for TMP Policy Action**

A summary of the demand and supply issues that emanated from the extensive mapping of the current status of Butuan City Tourism are identified to inform the Tourism Master Plan:

The report identifies that the key areas that are endowed with both natural and cultural resources to attract high numbers of tourist. These are centered on Balangay Boat Shrine, National Museum (Butuan Branch) and Bood Promontory Park, and Banza Church Ruins, Agusan River and its estuaries and other Cultural Heritage Sites.

All of these are prioritized for tourism development in the City Plans. This also acknowledges the need to first improve and expand the underutilized and underdeveloped tourism resources with the hope that these high magnet attraction will be used as catalysts in the media campaigns so as to continue to increase that demand and direct both public and private investment to those areas. What becomes critical is the capacity to absorb and sustain tourism growth which might be the consequence of such interventions- in essence supply must be able to keep up with demand.

Critical areas of concerns in the demand and supply analysis to be addressed at once, absence of a well-maintained database of tourism product

and facilities, provision of a conducive environment for tourism development and growth through improving access to tourism products.

*The delivery of basic infrastructure on which tourism heavily relies and delivery of tourism infrastructure. Attracting tourists (there is underperformance currently) as well as the potential investors to private investment through properly managed marketing and investment strategies. Priority to package and theme current tourism products and experiences around the key magnet attractions which already attract high volumes of tourists (Balangay Museums and Shrines).*

## **6.0 Impacts on Local Government:**

The impacts of Tourism on Local Government will likely start in the delivery of basic infrastructure and support facilities like concrete roads, power, water, transportation and communications and others leading to the different natural and cultural attractions on which tourism heavily relies for its growth and development.

From thereon, it will create jobs in rural communities that can be quantified through the contributes to income and standard of living, improves local economy, increases employment opportunities, creates investment, development, and infrastructure spending, increases tax revenues, improves public utilities infrastructure, improves transport infrastructure, increases opportunities for shopping. Also, unquantifiable benefits can be derived from economic impacts through access of health and education services, more housing units constructed and many more.

It also impacts on environment, like the preservation and protection of selected natural environments or prevention of further ecological decline. This include the preservation of historic buildings and monuments and improvement of the area's appearance.

This will redound on Social and Cultural Impacts wherein City's tourism industry will likely improve quality of life of the host community and facilitates meeting visitors (educational experience).

It could also mean the change of positive in values and customs and promotes cultural exchanges, improves understanding of different communities, preserves cultural identity of host population, increases demand for historical and cultural exhibits, greater tolerance of social differences and the satisfaction of psychological needs.

The City's services both public and private institutions will definitely increase recreation facilities and opportunities, of which the level of better standard of services are ensured by shops, restaurants, and other business establishments. It also improves quality of performance of fire protection, as well as police protection and government standard services to visitors.

For the host community, their attitudes will raise to a higher level for it heightens their pride and honor. They will be able to appreciate and safeguard their local resources for sustainable uses of their children. Thereby, their community is very interesting and exciting place to live in.

## **7.0 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats,(SWOT)**

### **Analysis:**

#### 7.1 Strategic Options(using the SWOT Analysis)

The first strategic option using SWOT analysis is to **use the Strengths** of the Tourism Resources both natural and cultural attractions in order to **avail of the Opportunities** provided both by the local and national governments, Private-Public Partnership(PPP) and to tap other available resources from line



agencies, private sectors and foreign sources. The second combination is to **use the Strengths** to **avoid the Threats** posed by those who control the vital resources of the external environment. These include the power structure and forces which influence the internal organization. The third combination is to **remove the Weaknesses** of the natural and cultural tourism sites by **using the Opportunities** of the external environment. If the weakness will not be overcome and addressed, the same situation and problem will exist and persist again, depriving the development and growth of the tourism sector as the driver/sparkplug of the city's economy. The fourth combination is to **solve the Weaknesses** of the tourism industry to **avoid Threat** by the external forces.

The main focus of the SWOT Analysis is anchored on its strategic direction which include: 1.) Quality of Tourism facilities and services, 2.) Tourism investment & business climate, 3. Safeguarded natural & cultural heritage & vulnerable groups, 4.) Tourism Governance and Tourism Workforce, 5.) Product Development and destination Awareness, and, 6.) Market Access, connectivity and destination infrastructure.

The SWOT analysis of the Butuan City Tourism sector is presented as follows:

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
* Quality of tourism facilities and services	* Declared as Cultural mine in Asia because of the Balangay Boat according to UNESCO  * Presence of Tourism Information Centers in the Airport and the City Hall boost Tourist destination awareness	* Indifference of our locals to our own heritage  * Lack of more tourism information centers	* Huge market for historical tours  * Additional TIC units will result to increased influx of tourist on alternative tourist destinations	* Deterioration of the Archaeological Artifacts  * Possible inadequate capacity of support facilities at the alternate

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Presence of Agusan river</li> <li>* Establishment of DOT Accredited Tourist Guides and Tour Operators</li> <li>*Declared as an Archeological sites(whole Butuan)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* No standardized services offered by the operators</li> <li>* Lack of ordinance to support Tourism development and growth implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Possible inadequate capacity of support facilities at the alternate tourist destination</li> <li>* Alleviate the quality of tourism services in the locality</li> <li>* Possible increase in non-accredited tourism services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tourist destination</li> <li>* Possible increase in non-accredited tourism services</li> <li>*Flooding</li> </ul>
* Tourism investment & business climate	*Available resources, skilled manpower and technology that is uniquely Butuan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Inadequate sustainability of support facilities and programs</li> <li>*Less tourism investments</li> </ul>	*Potential Development of new tourism sites & services	* Lack of entrepreneurship & possibility of duplicating tourism services
*Safeguarded natural & cultural heritage &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Endemic Natural &amp; cultural heritage that can only be found in Butuan</li> <li>* Enhancement of festivals &amp; tourism events</li> <li>* Kahimunan festival</li> <li>* Balangay festival</li> <li>* Balangay theater float</li> <li>* Lumbia festival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Natural resources are too large to be effectively managed</li> <li>* Development of culture sensitive &amp; commercially competitive shows</li> <li>* Flow of local &amp; foreign tourist and visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*If properly managed, can be turned to be huge gold mine of opportunities</li> <li>* Weak &amp; short event planning</li> <li>* Less effort in making it as a major event enough to attract tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Exploitation of different opportunists</li> <li>* Cultural people exploitation</li> <li>* Over commercialization resulting to the ruin &amp; corruption of culture</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Abayan festival</li> <li>* Light up Butuan</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Lack promotion</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Tourism Governance and Tourism Workforce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*City Tourism act of 2009</li> <li>*Creation of the Tourism department in the LGU - ready for Implementation</li> <li>*presence of the private sectors</li> <li>*presence of the active Tourism Council organization of tourism related organizations like : CTC, CARTOGA, BACE, Caraga Travel Links, BANCCA, BAHARA, etc.</li> <li>*increasing number of tourism front liners</li> <li>*increase number of transportation</li> <li>*More schools offering tourism related courses</li> <li>*presence of TESDA offering tourism related courses and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Non-implementation LGU Tourism division lack personality because its not an office</li> <li>*private sectors - Not properly tapped</li> <li>*No Tourism Master plan yet</li> <li>* Lack of proper effective tourism workforce</li> <li>*Non-Sustainability of Implementation of Tourism projects</li> <li>*High business taxes</li> <li>*No package for tourism business incentives</li> <li>*some stakeholders are not well organized</li> <li>*Co-terminous status of the tourism council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Growing Economic boom in Butuan</li> <li>*Sustainability of tourism plans, projects &amp; activities</li> <li>*despite change of administration</li> <li>*coming in of foreign and domestic investors</li> <li>*fairer weather than other neighboring areas in Caraga</li> <li>*Lower business taxes</li> <li>Business fast lane</li> <li>*PPP</li> <li>*increase of tourist arrivals</li> <li>*more reason to come because of the positive experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Other cities have better tourism policies and proposals &amp; were well implemented</li> <li>*Other cities have better incentives</li> <li>*offered for tourism related businesses</li> <li>*highly politicized environment</li> <li>*tourism not a priority</li> <li>*lack of appreciation of tourism opportunities</li> <li>*other areas offer better opportunities for trained manpower</li> </ul>

	<p>standardization &amp; accreditation</p> <p>*Active participation of IPs</p> <p>* Offering of archaeology &amp; anthropology courses</p> <p>* Integration of Butuan history, language, cuisine, song &amp; dances, arts &amp; crafts in localschools</p>	<p>*Service providers no sufficient information of the local tourism activities</p> <p>* Massive cultural awareness</p> <p>*do not offer attractive compensation &amp; incentives to skilled &amp; qualified</p> <p>*manpower no hold of trained manpower</p> <p>*standardization as to safety of workforce(hazard pay, tariff rates, etc.)</p> <p>*lack of opportunities for the indigenous peoples group in tourism activities</p> <p>*lack of tourism investment promotions</p> <p>*lack of the enforcement of tourism standard policies under the</p>		
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		Tourism Act of 2009		
*Product Development and destination Awareness Market Access, connectivity and destination Infrastructure	*Organized transport sector *Access to land, air, water transport *Butuan as gateway to Caraga *9 airplane flights a day *Improved national highways *Access to internet, social networking *Visibility in the internet world, print-outs, *Presence of communication facilities *Fast-tracking of business transactions as supported by the City Government *On-going access roads *Extensive waterways *Presence of banking facilities *Increasing public trust to LGU, people come to Butuan	*Need to improve transport sector in handling tourists *Transport sector lacks pride of place *Poor airport facilities, i.e. short runways *Some tourism sites are privately owned *Poor road network going to and from potential tourist destination *Absence of sea port *Lack of tourism information collaterals *Awareness of tourism development projects *Problems with project implementation and downloading (some due to political factors) *Absence of local shipping industry	*International port from nearby areas *Geographically connected to other provinces of Mindanao *Development of PPPs, to explore tourism resources *Access to national and international eco-tourism programs *Balikbayan *Economic boom of the country	*Competition from developed tourist sites of nearby areas *Effects of climate change, as tourist destinations are mostly ecological *Peace and Order *Environmental degradation

		*We lack cable transport technology and other traditional transport like horses		
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