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UP CIDS DISCUSSION PAPER 2019-06

Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities in Sustainable Tourism Development in Central Visayas: Specific and Common Concerns of Cebu and Bohol

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Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities in Sustainable Tourism Development in Central Visayas: Specific and Common Concerns of Cebu and Bohol

BELINDA F. ESPIRITU¹ and CORA JANE C. LAWAS²

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the status, issues and concerns, and challenges and opportunities in sustainable tourism development in Central Visayas using the framework of sustainable development, with its three aspects of socio-cultural sustainability, ecological sustainability, and economic sustainability. Cebu and Bohol, the top two tourist destinations in Central Visayas, are popular for the following: world-class hotels, beaches, and resorts; meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions (MICE) tourism; community-based ecotourism; cultural tourism; and agri-tourism. Both provinces have issues and concerns, challenges, and opportunities—some of which are specific to each, while some are common to both. Among the specific issues and concerns in Cebu are the need for good governance and inter-agency coordination for sustainable tourism, particularly in ecotourism sites, and the need to develop and strengthen more types of alternative

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tourism. Bohol is concerned with restoring and preserving its heritage structures and ensuring equitable economic growth and environmental sustainability. Their common issues include tourism-induced prostitution, climate change, disaster risk preparedness, growing traffic congestion, water sustainability, solid waste management, air pollution controls, quality of water in seas, preservation of marine resources, the need for an efficient public transportation system, and the implementation of their tourism and environmental codes to ensure sustainability.

KEYWORDS

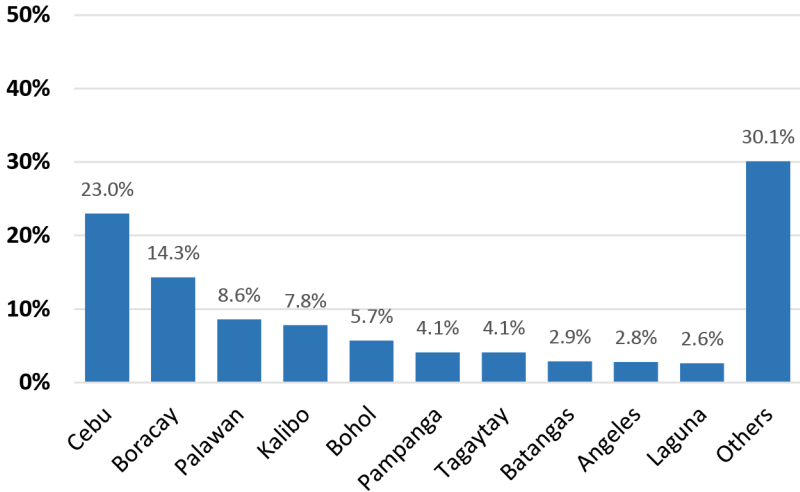
Sustainable tourism, Central Visayas, ecotourism, cultural tourism, multi-stakeholder partnerships

The state of tourism in Central Visayas: Trends and updates

The twenty-first century is characterized by a rapidly growing tourism industry in the Philippines that is fully supported by both private and public sectors and is backed by a booming economy and relatively stable political atmosphere (Pilapil-Añasco and Lizada 2014)—despite the administration’s bloody war on drugs, the stalled peace process with the communist rebels, the war in Marawi, and political strife. Blessed with scenic spots, rich natural resources, white beaches, and a Spanish Catholic heritage manifested in its centuries-old churches, forts, and colorful religious festivals, the Philippines has taken advantage of tourism as a driver for growth, which is complemented by increased connectivity, growing availability of local products and services, and effective marketing and promotions.

Outside Metro Manila, two places in the Central Visayas region of the Philippines—the provinces of Cebu and Bohol—are among the top ten destinations for domestic and foreign tourists. Cebu ranks after Manila as the most visited place in the Philippines both by local and international tourists. Figure 1 shows that 23% of sampled tourists visited Cebu in 2017, followed by Boracay at 14.3%, Palawan at 8.6%, Kalibo at 7.8%, and Bohol at 5.7%.

FIGURE 1 Places visited by domestic and foreign tourists outside Metro Manila (as of 2017)



Source: Office of Tourism Development Planning, Research and Information Management, Department of Tourism. 2017. *Visitor Sample Survey 2017*. Manila: Department of Tourism.

Figure 1 shows that in the Central Visayas Region, Cebu is the most visited place by both domestic and foreign tourists, followed by Bohol. The top ten tourist attractions in Central Visayas, as listed by online travel guide Sygic Travel (n.d.), are in Cebu and Bohol. Most of these destinations are natural sites and only two are cultural/historical. These attractions are: (1) Kawasan Falls in Badian, Cebu; (2) Tops Lookout in Busay, Cebu City; (3) Magellan's Cross in Cebu City; (4) Hinagdanan Cave in Bohol; (5) Fort San Pedro in Cebu City; (6) Chocolate Hills Complex in Bohol; (7) Rajah Sikatuna Protected Landscape Nature Center in Bohol; (8) Tumalog Waterfalls in Oslob, Cebu; (9) Butterfly Sanctuary in Cebu City; and (10) Philippine Tarsier Sanctuary in Bohol.

Aside from the existing nature-based and cultural tourism in the region, the Department of Tourism (DOT) Region 7 stepped up its programs in Central Visayas in 2017 to help realize the 12 million tourist target by 2022. These programs include attracting a bigger share of the meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions

(MICE) and the English as a second language (ESL) markets, further development of agri-tourism, health and wellness, and retirement tourism, and more focused promotional events of local tourism destinations in the region (Cacho 2016).

Cebu has been the host of major international events like the 2015 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit, the Regent Aguila Ironman 70.3 Asia-Pacific Championship 2018, the International River Summit 2018, the Routes Asia 2019 forum, and the CAPA–Centre for Aviation LCCs in North Asia Summit 2019. Aside from MICE tourism, Cebu is also much visited for its beach resorts (sun, sand, and sea), ecotourism sites, the annual Sinulog Festival, and education and entertainment tourism products and services. In the province of Cebu, a group of ecotourism destinations, dubbed as the ‘Big 5,’ was launched in October 2017 to shift toward “a more sustainable, more green kind of tourism, a destination that will probably work for discerning travelers and tourists” (Costas quoted in Galolo 2017). The destinations in the ‘Big 5’ are the (1) Birding Tour and Nature Trek in Alcoy; (2) Farm to Table Tour in Alegria; (3) Bojo River Cruise in Aloguinsan; (4) Heritage Walk in Boljoon; and (5) Culinary Journey in Argao (Galolo 2017).

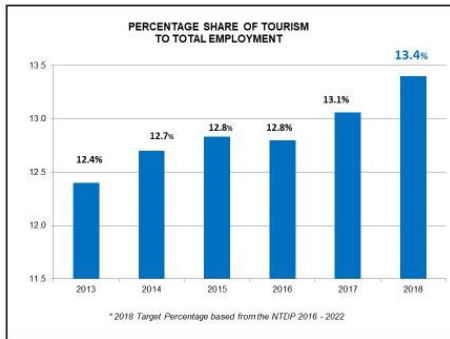
The tourism industry, being able to diversify its services, opened new windows which undoubtedly held the promise of increased employment and income opportunities, particularly for Filipinos living in coastal and rural areas (Pilapil-Añasco and Lizada 2014). In Central Visayas, tourism is one of the economic growth drivers, together with real estate, retail trade, air transportation, and the information technology and business process management (IT/BPM) industries (Regional Development Council DOT-7 2017).

Tourism is seen both as an employment generator and an economic growth driver. As Abocejo (2015, 2) writes, “The continued tourism expansion and development provide impetus for employment generation and consequently bring about opportunities for augmenting income among Cebuano workforce residing in the rural areas and those in coastal destination areas where tourism activities are found.”

Figure 2 below shows that tourism has contributed 13.1% of the total employment in the Philippines in 2017. Data shows that there is an increasing trend in the percentage share of tourism to total employment in the country from 4.7 million persons employed in 2013 to 5.2 million persons employed in 2016, and an estimated 5.3 million persons employed in 2017. For 2018, the target percentage share is 13.4%, which is 0.3% higher than that of 2017.

FIGURE 2 Percentage share of tourism to total employment, 2013–2017

TOURISM EMPLOYMENT 2013-2017



Source: Philippine Tourism Satellite Account, Philippine Statistics Authority
*Target based on the NTDP 2016 - 2022

SOURCE: PSA

Year	# of Persons Employed
2013	4.7M
2014	4.9M
2015	5.0M
2016	5.2M
2017	5.3M

Employment in tourism was estimated at **5.3 M** (13.1% of total employment in PH) in 2017

This was higher by 0.8% compared to 5.2 M (12.8% of total employment in PH) in 2016

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority's "Philippine Tourism Satellite Accounts" (published on June 7, 2018)

Source: Quiachon, Judilyn. 2018. "Update on the Tourism Industry." PowerPoint presentation, Roundtable Discussion on Sustainable Tourism in Central Visayas, University of the Philippines Cebu, October 10, 2018.

Employment from tourism, in order to become sustainable, requires a constant influx of both domestic and foreign tourists and the provision of necessary infrastructure and amenities to cater to visitors. Table 1 (on page 6) shows the total number of domestic and foreign arrivals in Cebu, Bohol, Negros Oriental, and Siquijor in 2017, which reached up to 4,068,648 domestic tourists and 2,906,026 foreign tourists (For a detailed distribution of foreign tourists by continents and countries, *see* Appendices A and B). In 2017, Cebu was visited by a total of 2,613,005 domestic tourists and 2,264,042 foreign tourists. Bohol is the next most visited province, tallying 686,858 domestic

tourists and 444,207 foreign tourists in 2017. Negros Oriental is the third most visited province, while Siquijor is the least visited place.

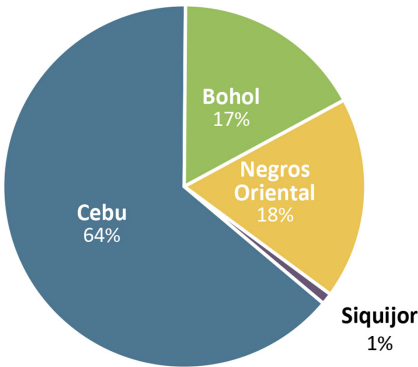
TABLE 1 Total number of domestic and international arrivals in Central Visayas, 2017

Province	Domestic arrivals	international arrivals
Cebu	2,613,005	2,264,042
Bohol	686,858	444,207
Negros Oriental	716,393	153,381
Siquijor	52,392	44,396
TOTAL	4,068,648	2,906,026

Source: Planning and Statistics Division, Department of Tourism Region 7

Figure 3 below shows the percentage shares of domestic arrivals in Central Visayas by its four provinces in 2017. Cebu has the biggest percentage share of domestic arrivals at 64%, a big majority of domestic tourists, followed by Negros Oriental at 18%, Bohol at 17%, and Siquijor at 1%.

FIGURE 3 Percentage share of domestic arrivals in Central Visayas by province, 2017

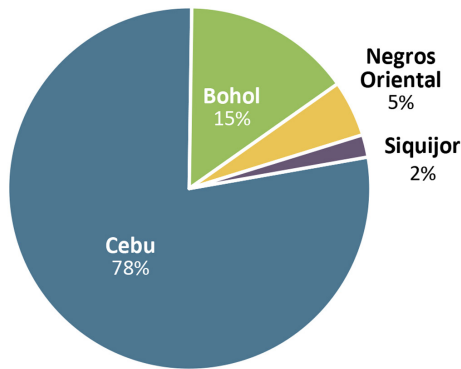


Source: Planning and Statistics Division, Department of Tourism Region 7

Figure 4 below shows the percentage share of international

arrivals in Central Visayas in 2017 by province. Just like for domestic arrivals, Cebu has the biggest percentage of foreign arrivals at 78%. It is followed by Bohol at 15%, Negros Oriental at 5%, and Siquijor at 2%.

FIGURE 4 Percentage share of international arrivals in Central Visayas by province, 2017



Source: Planning and Statistics Division, Department of Tourism Region 7

While Central Visayas has foreign tourist markets from all continents, its top foreign tourist markets are from East Asia, the United States (US), Australia, Western Europe, and Canada. Table 2 below shows the top ten foreign tourist markets in Central Visayas in 2016 and 2017, showing that Korea is the top one foreign tourist market gaining 36.38% share of the total number of tourists, followed by China at 17.39%, Japan at 16.55%, USA at 8.90%, Taiwan at 2.91%, Australia at 2.90%, Germany at 2.37%, France at 2.04%, United Kingdom at 2.00%, Canada at 1.74%, and others at 6.93%.

TABLE 2 Top 10 foreign tourist markets in Central Visayas, 2016 and 2017

Country	% share	2016 volume	2017 volume	Growth rate
Korea	36.28%	842,985	895,776	6.26%
China	17.39%	244,925	429,306	75.28%
Japan	16.55%	369,860	408,566	10.47%

Country	% share	2016 volume	2017 volume	Growth rate
United States	8.90%	201,222	219,796	9.23%
Taiwan	2.91%	42,261	71,739	69.75%
Australia	2.90%	63,627	71,724	12.73%
Germany	2.37%	46,918	58,432	24.54%
France	2.04%	42,961	50,257	16.98%
United Kingdom	2.00%	43,243	49,484	14.43%
Canada	1.74%	35,281	43,084	22.12%
Others	6.93%	70,784	171,186	141.84%
TOTAL	100.00%	2,004,067	2,469,350	23.22%

Source: Planning and Statistics Division, Department of Tourism Region 7

The top foreign tourist markets in Cebu Province, Cebu City, Lapu-Lapu City, and Mandaue City as of 1 August 2018 are from East Asia, US, and Australia. Koreans top the list in terms of nationality, followed by Japanese, Chinese, Americans, and Australians. The numbers show that places in the island of Cebu are much visited by foreign tourists from its East Asian neighbors, and followed by tourists from as far as the USA and Australia, proving that Cebu has a viable size of foreign tourist markets.

Tourism, however, is an industry “built upon the most fragile of natural and cultural environments, where the most inconsequential and innocent of human gestures can easily wreak havoc on the resources of a particular tourism area” (Pilapil-Añasco and Lizada 2014, 6). The triple bottom line—referring to the three goals of profit, environment, and community—was given attention in the crafting of the 1987 Constitution and was the guiding principle in the drafting of the Tourism Act of 2009. These three interrelated goals should thus be considered in the planning of all tourism activities. With these three goals, “the tourism activities are planned in advance with involvement of all stakeholders, locally oriented and at least partially controlled, focused on educational experiences, conservation of natural resources

and appreciation for local culture were given priority, and more revenue stays with local community and marine protected areas” (Pilapil-Añasco and Lizada 2014, 6).

Cebu and other places in Central Visayas must ensure measures to protect and enhance its natural and cultural sites and attractions in order to strengthen and improve its tourism competitiveness. Abocejo (2015, 1) defines tourism competitiveness as “the ability of the tourism industry to stay in a competitive position while optimally satisfying tourist (or customer) expectations by way of providing better goods and services delivery as compared to other offered goods and services in the tourism market.” The concept of competitiveness, writes Abocejo (2015), encompasses economic, social, and cultural dimensions of a tourism entity with ensured high productivity of the tourism fundamentals in the local destination or attraction area for the optimal satisfaction of the tourists. But the optimal satisfaction of tourists is only one side of the coin, for a tourist activity or site must be properly implemented and effectively managed towards greater economic development and long-term sustainability, as well as improved and sustained standards of living of the community where the tourism destination is located (Crouch and Ritchie 1999, as cited in Abocejo 2015).

This discussion paper seeks to find out not only the trends, statistics, and updates in tourism in Central Visayas, but more importantly, it answers the question of how sustainable are the tourism industries in Central Visayas. This exploratory paper looks into the measures taken, the challenges faced, the issues and concerns, and opportunities in sustainable tourism in Central Visayas. It seeks to fulfill the following specific objectives:

- (1) To find out the issues, concerns, opportunities, and challenges in the sustainability of tourism in Central Visayas based on environmental, economic, and sociocultural indicators;
- (2) To identify contributing factors and some best practices towards sustainable tourism in Central Visayas; and

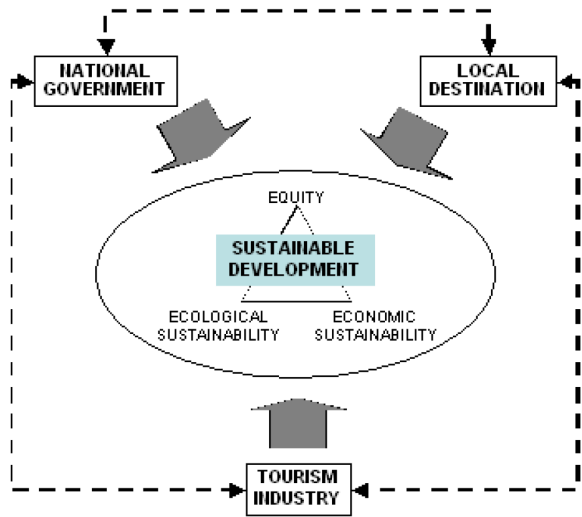
- (3) To determine the researchable topics for sustainable tourism in Central Visayas.

**Sustainable tourism development:
A multidimensional and multi-stakeholder framework**

Understanding sustainable tourism development requires an understanding of the fundamental concept of sustainable development (Cruz 2005, 82). A significant aspect of the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in 2002 was the inclusion of sustainable tourism development, particularly ecotourism and community-based tourism, as strategies for reducing poverty. The first of these principles stated that “[t]ourism development shall be based on criteria of sustainability, which means that it must be ecologically bearable in the long term, economically viable, as well as ethically and socially equitable for the local communities” (Aronsson 2000, as quoted in Cruz 2005, 84).

Hence, Alampay (2005) proposes the following framework for research on sustainable tourism development:

FIGURE 5 Proposed framework for research on sustainable tourism development



Source: Alampay 2005

To elaborate further on the meaning of sustainable tourism development, the concept of sustainability needs to be further understood. McVey (quoted in Cruz 2005, 85) identifies the three core elements of sustainability:

- *Economic sustainability*, or efforts to maintain growth rates at manageable levels and promote tourism while keeping an eye on capacities to handle greater demand to avoid consumer dissatisfaction;
- *Social sustainability*, or society's ability to absorb increasing tourist arrivals without adversely affecting or damaging indigenous culture; and
- *Environmental sustainability*, which is related to the capacity of the natural and built environment to handle tourism without damage.

A fourth element was added by the United Nations (UN) Commission for Sustainable Development—institutional sustainability, which refers to:

a country's commitment to sustainable development as manifested by the incorporation of sustainable principles into development planning, partnerships for sustainable development, the use of indicators for monitoring sustainability, presence of monitoring and coordinating bodies for sustainable development, and the enactment of laws that promote sustainable development (Cruz 2005, 85).

Cruz (2005) synthesizes the meaning of sustainable tourism from his review of related literature in the following manner:

- Is economically viable;
- Promotes conservation of natural resources and indigenous culture;
- Supports preservation of local culture;
- Takes a long-term perspective and is concerned with the well-being of future generations;

- Promotes equity, or sharing the benefits and risks of tourism;
- Engages multi-stakeholder participation in decision making and management;
- Promotes cooperation and partnerships;
- Promotes responsibility and accountability in behavior and relationships;
- Is marketed responsibly;
- Is integrated into planning;
- Upholds respect for others; and
- Emphasizes the importance of education, research, and capability building.

Cruz (2005, 110–13) culls the economic, socio-cultural, and institutional indicators of sustainable tourism from a review of literature from local and international agencies and initiatives that may be useful for evaluating and reviewing sustainable tourism development. The indicators are shown below per category:

A. Environmental indicators

- Presence of infrastructure to manage and minimize solid and liquid wastes
- Water quality index for fresh water and marine/beach water
- Air quality index
- Percent of population exposed to noise and light pollution
- Percent of population exposed to foul odor
- Amount of water consumed, and percentage of leakage
- Amount of fossil fuels used
- Speed of motor vehicles during rush hour
- Amount of packaging purchased with supplies
- Adherence to codes of behavior that respect natural heritage

- Compliance with best practice guidelines in designing, planning, and constructing buildings
- Adoption of technologies that reduce consumption of natural resources, production of wastes, and incidence of pollution (sustainable energy like solar power)
- Use of local materials, where sustainable, and local architecture on a scale that does not create a negative aesthetic impact
- Extent of use of soft transport (cycle routes, walking trails)
- Use of sustainable trails, hides, and interpretation
- Use of sustainable materials (e.g., souvenirs not made from parts of endangered animal and plant species)
- Use of environment-friendly chemicals (e.g., biodegradable soaps and detergents)
- Park fees used to manage habitat and species
- Percentage of profits invested in nature conservation
- Average annual frequency and severity of natural disasters

B. Socio-cultural indicators

- (Decent) livelihood opportunities; number of locals selling products to tourists or supplying stores
- Number of tourism businesses operated and managed by local people's organizations and cooperatives
- Number of private tourism businesses employing local people
- Poverty incidence and alleviation in tourist areas (calorie intake, income levels, number of children attending school in tourism destinations, self-rated poverty (Mangahas 1999), percentage of population living on less than \$1 a day, number of informal settlers (squatters), percent of underweight children, unemployment rate)
- Local linkages, as indicated by percentage of inputs, including souvenirs and handicrafts, obtained from within the local

economy; or within a certain distance from the site of a certain tourism project

- Percentage of staff employed from a certain distance (e.g., within 50 km) of the tourism project site
- Community's share of profits from tourism
- Access to and provision of tourism facilities for disadvantaged groups, such as the physically handicapped, families with small children, the elderly, and people with low wages
- Percentage of goods, services, and labor procured from women, indigenous peoples, and the handicapped
- Membership in voluntary organizations and NGOs involved in sustainable tourism
- Incidence of prostitution
- Number of sexual harassment cases
- Safety for tourists (as indicated by number of crimes against tourists, incidence of illness among tourists, and access to health facilities, tourist police per x number of tourists, civil unrest, wars, terrorism, insurgency)
- Presence and proportion of local dishes on menus
- Number of schools with courses or subjects on sustainable tourism
- Number of research, conferences, and publications on the subject of sustainable tourism and related topics
- Amount of research funding on sustainable tourism development
- Number of experts on sustainable tourism based on educational attainment, and years of experience
- Budget for cultural heritage site conservation
- Gap between rich and poor in tourism areas
- Community involvement in the planning, research, and decision-making processes

- Community satisfaction with tourism
- Leaders developed from within the community
- Gender and ethnic equality in employment
- Job accessibility to local community, indigenous people, handicapped, and women for all levels (entry points to highest management level), expressed as percentage of total number of jobs available in the tourism industry
- Provision of facilities for tourists and tourism workers to practice their religions and cultural practices
- Respect for indigenous intellectual property as indicated by laws prohibiting the trading in these assets
- Respect for ancestral domains
- Existence of social tourism program; programs for the youth, students, senior citizens, and the handicapped
- Provision of technical support to local tourism businesses (marketing, training, and managerial support)
- Investment in human resources development (HRD), as indicated by the presence of in-house training programs, number of staff sent to training, and study programs
- Existence and quality of visitor information centers
- Use of languages understandable to tourists in interpretation
- Existence of domestic tourism program in schools involving trips to cultural heritage sites
- Availability of interpretation materials and written information (information boards, labels, signs, books, maps, postcards, brochures)
- Existence of partnerships for the exchange of information, skills, and technology relating to sustainable tourism (e.g., access to resource centers on best practices; conferences and workshops)
- Incidence of discrimination

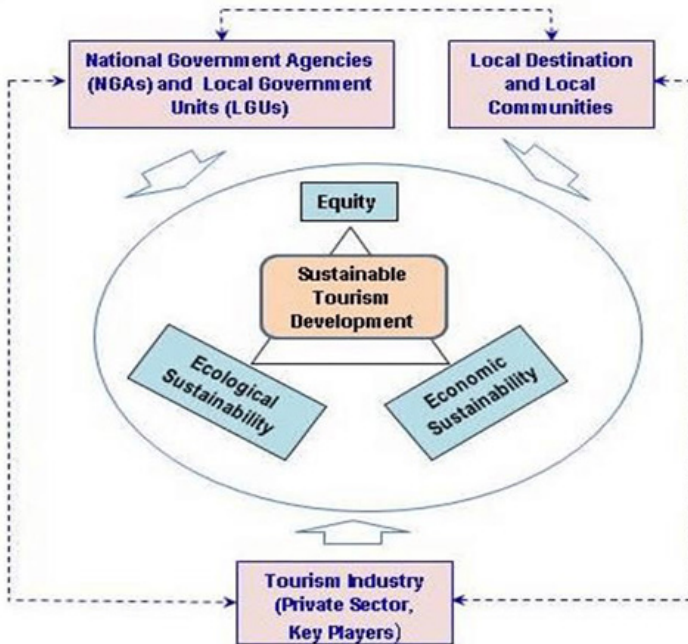
- Support for fairly traded products (e.g., wood products from sustainable forests, legally imported goods)
- Percentage of unique, and naturally/culturally/historically significant places which are being preserved and protected by local government, NGOs, and international agencies
- Percent of households and tourism establishments with access to safe water
- Percent of households and tourism establishments with access to electricity

C. Institutional indicators

- Presence of tourism master plans which incorporate sustainable principles
- Number of sites with sustainable tourism master plans
- Presence of inter-agency coordination and cooperation
- Presence of land use and zoning plans
- Percentage of establishments or local government units (LGUs) adhering to environmental impact assessment system and institution
- Presence of environment monitoring system (EMS) and funding
- Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAS) and EMS required for all business registrations
- Presence of protected areas management system
- Laws protecting ancestral domains
- Existence of a tourism council/cooperatives or equivalent structure at various levels for discussing tourism issues
- Presence of indicators and adherence to the same
- Amount of research and development funding for sustainable tourism

Based on the indicators presented above, the researchers propose a framework which is a slight modification from the one proposed by Alampay (2005). Figure 6 portrays the interactions and interrelations of stakeholders in tourism. The framework exhibits collaboration, coordination, and cooperation of various government agencies, the private sector, peoples' organizations, and communities. This will facilitate and determine how policies are framed, who benefits from these, what are the gaps in the implementation of such policies, and whether there are stakeholders who were marginalized in the process. The idea of equity corresponds to the socio-cultural indicators previously listed.

FIGURE 6 Framework of the study (modification of Alampay 2005)



The figure above is the overarching framework for the studies that will be conducted on sustainable tourism development in Central Visayas.

Methods for exploring issues and concerns in sustainable tourism in Central Visayas

This paper seeks to explore, find out, and describe the current status, trends, concerns, issues, opportunities, and challenges in sustainable tourism development in Central Visayas. It employs three research methods or procedures, namely roundtable discussion, desk research, and secondary data analysis.

The roundtable discussion held at the University of the Philippines (UP) Cebu consisted of short talks by each of the invited key players, reactions and responses of faculty members to the talks, and discussions for each portion.

The desk research entailed searching for reports and other data from the websites of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the Department of Tourism in Region 7. Secondary data analysis involved analyzing the data provided by the Planning and Statistics Division of the Department of Tourism in Region 7 and the talks from the roundtable discussion at UP Cebu.

Four dimensions of sustainable tourism are being looked into, namely economic, environmental, socio-cultural, and institutional, of which the indicators for each are listed in the previous section. Findings from the data construction were categorized according to (1) economic sustainability, (2) environmental sustainability, (3) socio-cultural sustainability, and (4) institutional sustainability.

Tourism is an economic growth driver, but are its benefits equitable and inclusive?

As mentioned, tourism is one of the five economic growth drivers in Central Visayas. Teresa Alambra (2018), Assistant Regional Director of NEDA Region 7, said in the roundtable discussion that trade benefits from a booming tourism industry since tourists spend money for shopping. Tourism also helps the real estate and construction industries because of the growing need for more hotels and other amenities.

Per the regional development plans for 2017–2022, tourism is seen to perform two roles: (1) as a job creator and (2) as an economic growth co-driver in the provinces of Central Visayas.

LGUs would want to develop their ecotourism industry, according to Alambra (2018), who further said that, “[w]e can see it as possible entry point for them to really grow economically as well as in developing the human capital.”

But the persistent concern when talking about tourism is whether its benefits apply to large population or to only to a few provinces and sectors in the community. This is something that needs to be studied or looked into. Are tourism’s economic benefits inclusive of the poorer sectors in society? Does tourism alleviate poverty in communities where tourist sites are located? These questions are some researchable topics on sustainable tourism development in the region.

Tourism and the environment: Mutual benefits, prospects, and continuing concerns

Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are continuing concerns as some of the tourism sites are vulnerable to the effects of rising sea levels and environmental changes. There is a growing trend of strict adherence to environmental laws, such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ (DENR) Administrative Order (AO) 2000-83 and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guidelines. In particular, DENR AO 2000-83 requires that structures should not be built within one kilometer from shorelines, unless given clearance by the Department (Alambra 2018).

The environmental impact and carrying capacity of tourism sites are things that should also be looked into. Housing and logistics monitoring boards should consider and incorporate carrying capacities—not only of protected areas, but also of other sites—in the development of their comprehensive land use plans. LGUs should also include the monitoring and maintenance of carrying capacities of tourist sites in crafting ordinances and policies. In fact, studies on carrying capacity are being undertaken by the NEDA on a few selected tourism sites.

Tourism benefits and supports environmental conservation in two ways (Alambra 2018). First, tourism provides economic incentives to protect or rehabilitate natural resources. Secondly, it increases community appreciation of the natural environment, which leads to the development of a conscious responsibility among the people to protect the environment. This also has something to do with good governance and the continuing debate between economic growth and environmental conservation. A contention has been raised that economic growth from tourism is not really inclusive, because some sectors will actually lose from strict adherence to environmental policies and will not benefit from ecotourism or sustainable tourism.

Good governance is needed in ensuring the environmental conservation of ecotourism sites. Alambra (2018) spoke of the Oslob, Cebu whale shark ecotourism case, in which the Sorsogon whale shark ecotourism management staff lodged a complaint about the way the whale sharks are handled in the area. They said that the practice done by Oslob fishermen of “luring the whale sharks” through krill feeding is not sustainable as it is not the natural feeding habit of whale sharks. The said feeding process is only done by the fishermen to attract the whale sharks so that tourists will have a close encounter with the wild sea creatures. Alambra (2018) said that the NEDA and the DENR actually went to the extent of actually trying to stop whale shark tourism in Oslob. However, the LGU of Oslob posed a very strong support for continuing the tourism activity despite the questionable practice of provisioning the whale sharks, citing the greater economic benefits that can be derived by both the LGU and the community. Although the LGU set guidelines that included the prohibition of the touching of whale sharks, there were still online videos that showed a diving visitor who touched a whale shark. Additional recommendations include the strengthening of briefing sessions for tourists and limiting the number of boats for tourists in the area.

Another ecotourism site of great potential are the highlands of Cebu City. Because tourists are flocking to highland and mountain barangays as alternative ecotourism sites, officials and communities in these areas would like to gain income from these alternative

ecotourism activities. Alambra (2018) said that there is a problem with coordination between the provincial government, the local government, and the national agencies regarding the conduct of tourism activities in the area. While the NEDA partners with the Cebu provincial government, Alambra (2018) said that “It’s a long process *kaya* they’re looking for a site and then they develop it. But in Cebu City, ongoing *na siya* but we have to intervene *na ma-develop ni sila na mga dapita*. And we ask for inventories of the possible ecotourism sites like the rivers *na pwede* for rafting. (It’s a long process because they’re looking for a site and then they develop it. But in Cebu City, this has been ongoing but we have to intervene for these places to be developed. And we ask for inventories of the possible ecotourism sites like the rivers that can be developed for rafting.)”

In Metro Cebu, the worsening traffic situation, water issues, solid waste management problems, traffic regulation problems (e.g., the lack of traffic lights in some places), and the absence of an efficient public transportation system pose challenges to sustainable tourism development. Additionally, the Organization of Economic Cooperation Development (OECD) study *Green Growth in Cebu, Philippines* identified changing land use patterns and a growing population as factors that severely strain local infrastructure and provision of basic urban services such as transportation, energy, water, and solid waste management (OECD 2017).

The increasing number of vehicles and traffic congestion, inadequate solid waste management, high air pollution levels, and the increase in demand for water supply are very prominent issues and problems that need to be addressed and solved in pursuit of sustainable tourism development in Cebu.

Cebu as a creative and cultural city and the dark side of tourism

Four concerns surfaced from the roundtable discussion in terms of the socio-cultural indicators of sustainable tourism development in Central Visayas.

The first concern is the dark side of tourism, which refers to prostitution and cyberpornography. With the sun, sand, and sea come cheap sex in the Philippines. It is a grim reality that foreigners come to the country for cheap sex.

The second concern is the development of high value-added products that can be sold to tourists. Tiffany Tan, Dean of the School of Management of UP Cebu, asked during the roundtable discussion what the NEDA is doing to encourage the production and selling of high value-added products so that tourists will come to the Philippines not just for the sun, sand, and sea, but also for these products. She asserted that it is very important to help businesses in Cebu because overreliance on tourism may not be healthy for the province's industries. Tan pointed out that Cebu survives because of trade and that Cebu should be the center of trade in the Visayas. Given this, she inquired what is being done to boost trade in Cebu. She added that it is necessary to compute the costs and benefits of tourism: the costs being its dark side versus its benefits which are its contributions to economic growth and job creation.

The third concern is the need to promote the art scene in Cebu which tourists can patronize. Maxwell Espina, former Dean of the College of Architecture at the University of San Carlos, asserted that if Cebuanos become successful in creating a very active art scene, the influx of tourists will naturally follow. This he expressed in the following words:

I think we have to take care of our arts because it is important for our community, rather than for foreigners or people from outside our immediate community. Art development should start from creating a sustainable environment for arts to flourish and if we are successful at creating a very active art scene, I think the tourists will naturally follow (Espina 2018).

But for this to happen, Espina (2018) explained that first, it needs local appreciation or support. The talent that is available in Cebu is unquestionable. In 2008, the British Council declared Cebu a Creative

City in Asia because of the strength of its furniture industry, and in 2010, Cebu was declared an ASEAN City of Culture for the richness and diversity of its culture and creative industries (Minty 2017). Espina asserted that Cebuanos have talents in various forms of art, including classical art like music, visual arts, painting, and architecture, and offshoot arts like film and digital art. Cebuano artists have gained successes in various festivals and competitions. The culinary arts of Cebu are also starting to gain some interest, not only locally, but even globally. There is also a budding theater scene in the province. What is needed is to ram up local support for the artists so that they will receive enough respect and support, not only from the community, but also from the government. Local artists need support in terms of awards, promotion of activities, and government support, which are all very important in developing a flourishing art scene.

Espina (2018) also stated the need for artists' hubs in promoting the arts in Cebu, which will eventually promote tourism in the province. There are also small art entrepreneurs in the province, such as TCH Apparel (named after the famous Transcentral Highway), a small shop in the town of Balamban that creates motorcycle jackets and shirts. Despite having visitors from as far as Manila going all the way to the shop to buy the apparel, the owner does not want to expand his business elsewhere and chooses to stay in Balamban. Another example of a local art entrepreneur is the brand Loalde, which used to be sold only in Cebu but is now gaining popularity outside the province. Products and services that are exclusively available in Cebu may be developed and marketed to generate interest from people outside Cebu.

The fourth concern was raised by Hearty Rizarri, Cebu City Tourism Officer, who talked about the challenges that the Cebu City Tourism Office faces. Aside from developing ecotourism sites in the highland barangays of Cebu City, Rizarri's vision is to recreate Cebu City as a pilgrimage destination in cooperation with the city's Cultural and Historical Affairs Commission (CHAC). She also envisions the transformation of the Plaza Independencia into a tourist attraction by providing cultural entertainment and by inviting local talents to hold their exhibits or performances. Cebu designers will also have

a venue with the creation of an Arts and Crafts Village. An audio-visual presentation showcasing its tourist products and sites will also be beneficial to the development of tourism in Cebu City.

Palmy Tudtud (2018), a Fine Arts professor at the UP Cebu, asserted that the Cebu City Library and Museum should also be developed, enhanced, and maintained so that it would not die. She noted the lack of government support for the arts and artists, unlike in the case of Australia where one to five percent of the budget are allocated for art commissions. Tudtud is wondering why Cebu City could not even put up public art sculptures when there are a lot of spaces in Cebu City, such as those in the South Road Properties (SRP). Another open space for public art sculptures is the Plaza Independencia.

Espina (2018) hopes that Cebu City will take notice of a very important aspect of tourism, which is maintaining or enhancing the sense of place. The city is slowly being occupied by buildings that look alike, so there is a need to create distinctions. The Downtown Cebu area can be developed because of its historical significance and its sense of place. For Espina (2018), the first thing that needs to be done is to remove the signages from decades-old architectural structures from the 1950s and 1960s. There is a need to reclaim what Downtown Cebu used to look like before. Cebuanos could learn from the experience of the municipality of São Paulo in Brazil, where buildings were painted to make the place more attractive and give it a sense of pride.

Institutional initiatives to boost tourism by enhancing connectivity and generating tourism growth drivers

NEDA-7 Assistant Regional Director Teresa Alambra said that the agency wants to enhance connectivity because without access, tourism opportunities will be put to waste. This is the reason why the Mactan–Cebu International Airport (MCIA) is being developed to become the major international gateway next to Manila. Because of the congestion at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), the MCIA is seen

as an alternative entry point to the Philippines. The NEDA-7 also plans to connect Cebu to other provinces so that tourism will be an economic growth driver in other provinces.

With 208 domestic flights and 66 international flights per day and a newly opened Terminal 2 (see Figure 7) to accommodate more international flights, the MCI is moving towards the direction of becoming a major international gateway. It has new direct flights to the US, the Middle East, China, Europe, Asia, and other international destinations. It is estimated to accommodate 12 million passengers for the year 2018.

FIGURE 7 The new Terminal 2 of the Mactan–Cebu International Airport

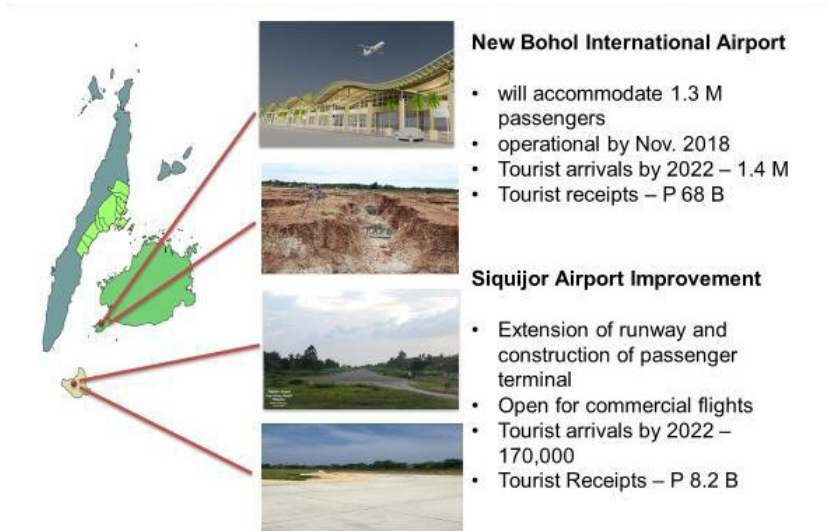


Source: Quiachon, Judilyn. 2018. *Update on the Tourism Industry*. PowerPoint presentation. Department of Tourism Region 7.

Bohol and Siquijor are targeted to be connected to the rest of the country and to the world. NEDA-7 also seeks to improve sea travel given the archipelagic nature of Central Visayas and its importance in building seamless connectivity. Tourists should be able to book sea tours online and the prices of fees and fares should be harmonized. Cruise ship port development in Bohol is also being looked into by NEDA-7. Connectivity among the islands of Central Visayas and outside the region is important for local and international tourism to flourish. The construction of the New Cebu International Seaport

began in 2018 in its proposed site at Liloan, Cebu, where it faces the Mactan Export Processing Zone (MEPZ). There will be a bridge that will link the international port directly to MCIA. The road transportation network is another project being pushed by the NEDA-7, such as the expansion of the Transcentral Highway to Toledo City and San Fernando.

FIGURE 8 Completion of airport facilities in Bohol and Siquijor



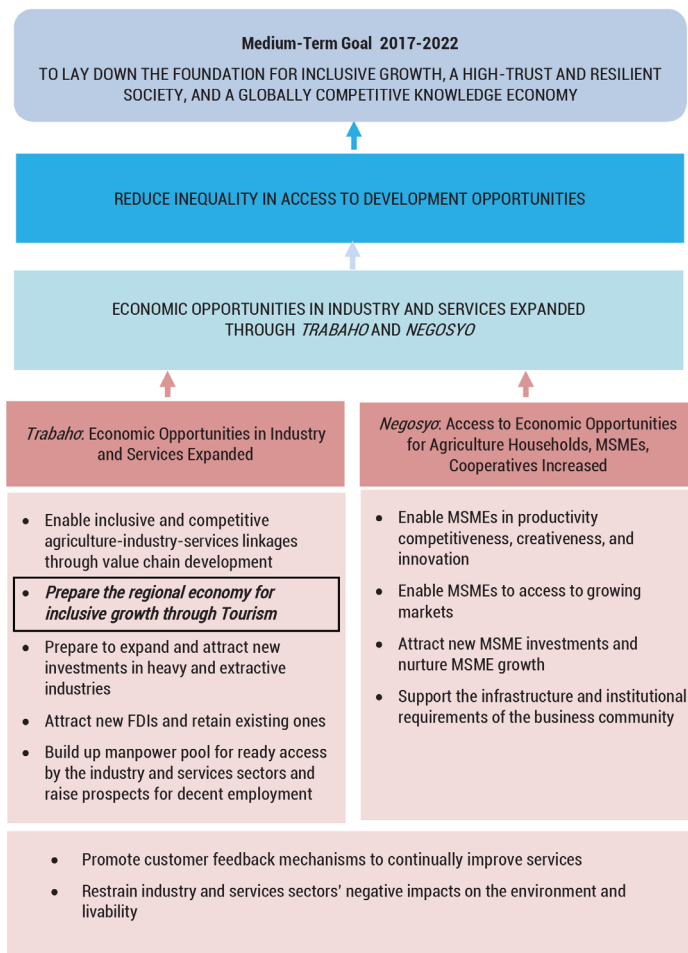
Source: Alambra, Teresa. 2018. PowerPoint presentation. National Economic and Development Authority Region 7.

At the regional level, there are indeed big infrastructure projects that are already in the plans of the NEDA. However, because Cebu is the entry point of these big development plans, these projects are expected to bring a major problem, which is the worsening of the traffic situation in the province, especially in Cebu City. The government of Cebu City and other agencies should have plans to solve the traffic problem in the face of looming infrastructure projects to ensure that it would not cause inconvenience to visitors in the Central Visayas region.

Another strategy to boost tourism is to generate new growth drivers such as the arts, culture, and creative industries—something

that will be pushed forward in the next four to five years. Inclusive growth is the thrust of the NEDA-7 in its Regional Development Plan 2017–2022. Figure 9 shows its medium-term plans on expanding economic opportunities in Central Visayas, including the preparation of the regional economy for inclusive growth through tourism.

FIGURE 9 Strategic framework to expand economic opportunities in industry and services for Central Visayas, 2017–2022



Source: Central Visayas Regional Development Council. 2017. *Central Visayas Regional Development Plan 2017–2022*. Cebu City: National Economic and Development Authority Regional Office No. 7.

According to Judilyn Quiachon, Supervising Tourism Operations Officer of DOT-7, the Department of Tourism is committed to the culture of sustainable tourism, which is defined as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities” (UN World Tourism Organization, as quoted by Quiachon 2018). This is evident in the National Tourism Development Plan 2016–2022, which features strategic directions of (1) improving competitiveness and enhancing growth, and (2) pursuing sustainability and inclusive growth (DOT 2016). There are seven programs under the first strategic direction, namely: (1) intensifying transport infrastructure development; (2) pursuing travel facilitation; (3) attracting tourism investments and improving business environment; (4) expanding product development; (5) designing and implementing an expanded marketing program; (6) enhancing human resource capacity and improving service standards; and (7) promoting initiatives in embracing quality standards. There are five strategic programs under the second strategic direction, namely: (1) supporting MSME development in tourism; (2) promoting gender and women empowerment; (3) expanding and promoting cultural offerings; (4) preserving the environment and promoting climate change adaptation; and (5) implementing risks and crisis management programs (DOT 2016).

Effective strategies, opportunities, and challenges in sustainable tourism in Bohol

Josephine Remolador-Cabarrus, head of the Bohol Tourism Office, delivered a talk on the sustainable tourism development practices and challenges in Bohol in the same roundtable discussion in UP Cebu. She explained that Bohol positions itself as a province that envisions the centrality of cultural heritage, a prime eco-cultural tourism destination, and a strong agro-industrial province with well-educated, God-loving, and law-abiding citizenry who are proud of their cultural heritage, enjoy a state of well-being, and committed to sound environmental management. Many factors are at play in Bohol’s journey to achieving sustainability, and these are the following:

- (1) *Community involvement.* A program called the Purok Power Movement, which involves *purok* or small clusters of ten households, is an information and communication strategy that has now evolved into a mode of translating and delivering government projects and programs at the local level. The program has been proven to be effective in involving and alerting the community, such as in the case of the presence of terrorist group Abu Sayyaf in Bohol. Children who first saw the Abu Sayyaf in their *purok* alerted their parents who, in turn, alerted the barangay captain and other government officials. Because of this, the crisis was resolved earlier than expected.
- (2) *Strong partnership with stakeholders.* Leadership should be shared and involve relevant stakeholders. The governor is not the only one who leads; the people in the community serve as mirrors of the governor, which means that administration of the province should be a partnership between government officials and the people in the community. There is also strong legislative support in terms of involved and shared governance.
- (3) *Open access to information focused towards inclusive growth.* The provincial government of Bohol constantly focuses on community-based tourism, which serves as a platform for including those in the rural areas into the province's tourism industry.
- (4) *Environmental protection.* The provincial environmental code has been recently revised to adapt to new challenges and issues facing Bohol's environment and natural resources. Sustainable tourism development has always been the major thrust of the provincial government as it is the main socio-economic growth driver of the province.

Effective strategies have also been employed to ensure sustainable tourism in the province. These strategies are:

- (1) *Strengthening tourism livelihood programs.* This is done by capacitating peoples' organizations which are usually the ones that manage the tourism activities in communities.
- (2) *Establishing good working relationships with national government agencies.* Partnerships with national government agencies such as the DENR, DOT, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) are essential in coordinating local and national sustainable tourism concerns and efforts.
- (3) *Forging partnerships with tourism industry employers such as hotels, inns, and resorts, among others.* The provincial government of Bohol has a program called "Turo-Turismo" (Teach-Tourism) for senior high school students and teachers. Teachers are immersed in tourism and accommodation establishments to equip them better to teach in TESDA and K to 12 courses, considering that most of them are not tourism or hospitality management graduates. Likewise, learning the ropes of the business from experience is different from learning these from books. Every summer, teachers immerse in resorts and hotels, especially in the area of Panglao.
- (4) *Developing agri-tourism.* Bohol is looking to level up its agriculture sector to agri-tourism so that farmers will not only earn from their produce, but also from supplemental activities from tourism. Being able to rub elbows with the tourists would somehow also give farmers a sense of self-esteem and pride.
- (5) *Putting in place regulatory codes and policies.* Environmental, tourism, and other administrative and regulatory codes and measures are put in place to control some aspects of the tourism industry, which may not be beneficial for stakeholders.
- (6) *Promoting advocacies in tourism-related programs.* The incorporation of advocacies such as 'barrier-free tourism' and

stopping child prostitution and human trafficking are done in conjunction with different organizations and stakeholders.

- (7) *Enacting and implementing the Bohol Environment Code.* Environmental protection and sustainable tourism are defined and guided by the Bohol Environment Code, whose guiding rules and regulations are implemented by the Bohol Environment Management Office.
- (8) *Providing infrastructure support.* Republic Act No. 9446 declares the province of Bohol as an eco-cultural tourism zone. By virtue of the law, all of Bohol's roads are considered as tourism roads and are therefore being funded by the national government. This saves the provincial government of Bohol from a huge amounts of spending and also makes the province's roads better.
- (9) *Providing reinforcements for ecotourism sites and services.* Most of Bohol's tourist attractions are either community-developed or LGU-run. Since ecotourism is Bohol's flagship tourism program, the provincial government gives support to LGUs and communities on technical matters, marketing and promotions, and assistance in planning and product development in coordination with national government agencies like the DOT and DENR, among others.
- (10) *Developing environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socially equitable tourism programs for local communities.* The provincial government of Bohol gives attention to putting into place mechanisms that are environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socially equitable through accelerating the development of local communities and spreading the benefit in terms of employment, livelihood generation, promotion, and entrepreneurship. The Bohol Tourism Office helps the rural poor to come up with local tours that are intended to decongest the area of Panglao and highlight alternative countryside destinations in the province. Carrying the slogan "Luxury of nature and people," these tours feature cultural activities and local industries such as farming,

loom weaving (in Tubigon), *calamay* making (in Jagna), and salt production. Local communities, especially peoples' organizations, were encouraged to take part in the development, operations, and management of these local tours and services and in ensuring the conservation and promotion of Bohol's natural resources and cultural treasures. As a result, people become more deeply aware of and involved in preserving the biodiversity and cultural heritage of Bohol.

- (11) *Building strong partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector through participatory governance.* Cabarrus (2018) explained such strong partnership in the following words: “*Sa Bohol lahi kaayo, ‘pag private sector ka and member ka of an organization, you are of course invited to everything in Bohol gikan sa planning hangtud marketing. We do market tourism with our Tourism Council, which is composed of government and private sector membership. It works very efficiently for us. In fact, sa tanan namong strategies, we always say that this is one of our most effective development strategies, kaning namong private sector. (In Bohol, it’s very different. If you belong to the private sector and you’re a member of an organization, you are of course invited to everything in Bohol from the planning up to marketing. We do market tourism with our Tourism Council, which is composed of government and private sector membership. It works very efficiently for us. In fact, in all our strategies, we always say that this is one of our most effective development strategies, our private sector.)’*”

Cabarrus also talked about the challenges and opportunities in sustainable tourism in the province of Bohol. Some of these are:

- (1) *Rise in the number of tourists.* Tourist arrivals in Bohol has increased by around 15% to 25%, but in 2015–2016, it rose by 35%. Measures to control the influx of tourists are not yet very well in so this trend poses challenges and concerns,

especially because it can give rise to the negative side of tourism such as prostitution and exploitation. The increasing number of visitors also provides challenges to infrastructure development in the province. In spite of these challenges, Bohol is trying to make sure that development lives up to the principles of sustainability and gives respect to local culture, traditions, and values. The tourism industry is the gateway to the sustainability of local small-scale cottage industries such as loom weaving, ironsmithing, *calamay* making, and local delicacies. Reports from the Bohol Investment Promotion Center state that investments in vertical infrastructure and transport facilities have been increasing dramatically.

- (2) *Preservation of built heritage.* The preservation of Bohol's built heritage structures gives livelihood to the people. Ten (10) churches were damaged in an earthquake that hit the province in 2013, most of which were considered by agencies such as the National Museum, the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) as National Cultural Treasures and as sites of historical and cultural significance. Fortunately, the national government was able to fund their restoration and rehabilitation. Locals who are doing the restoration under *Puera Talier* are also earning from these activities. The need to restore and preserve Bohol's cultural heritage led to the launching of the Bohol Institute of Living Tradition, an institute for cultural education and orientation, training, and professional development aimed at sustainable development of Boholano communities, artists, and cultural workers towards building a dynamic, prosperous, and creative Boholano society.
- (3) *Tourism and sustainable development.* In Bohol, CSOs and the provincial government work as one in addressing issues towards sustainable development, especially in terms of tourism. Agricultural development and other poverty reduction programs ensure equitable economic growth and environmental sustainability. The impact of continued

sustainable development efforts across Bohol can be seen in the province's decreasing poverty incidence. As of 2018, Bohol ranks second in terms of the largest number of poor people lifted out of poverty among the country's 81 provinces. The province's employment rate is likewise steadily increasing. At the same time, the Philippine Port Authority (PPA) Provincial Management Office (PMO) in Tagbilaran reported the second highest percentage increase in revenues last year among seaports in the Visayas. There is also a 25% increase in the number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which registered investments amounting to Php 1.5 billion. Most of the SMEs are in the tourism sector and created 11,962 jobs in 2017. Hospital facilities and equipment are also being upgraded under Bohol's hospital modernization program.

- (4) *Partnerships for environmental sustainability.* A memorandum of agreement (MOA) was signed by NGAs, the private sector, and LGUs of the municipalities of Dawis and Panglao and the city of Tagbilaran, signifying Bohol's commitment to protect and preserve its environment in the face of the province's rapid development and problems arising from growing tourism. An Executive Council is being organized to look into issues such as growing tourist arrivals, worsening traffic, and environmental regulation, and to come up with responses and solutions to these problems. The provincial government of Bohol is wary that the island of Panglao will be closed for rehabilitation the same way that the national government closed Boracay. The provincial government and the private sector initiated talks, meetings, and negotiations with the local government of Panglao to encourage the cleanup of the island and to address issues on easement, water sanitation, and septage management in coordination with the DENR. The Bohol Tourism Office also addressed concerns on the carrying capacity of Balicasag Island, the number one diving attraction in the province, by establishing a reservation system for diving and snorkeling activities. The province also has an environment management

system that is certified by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and is now transitioning to the implementation of a quality management system (QMS) set by the ISO. Bohol also has 180 marine protected areas and giant clam gardens under regular biophysical monitoring by the Bohol Environment Management Office.

- (5) *Ensuring peace and security.* In terms of peace and security, the provincial government of Bohol instituted Joint Task Force Dagon (a term which means amulet), which is tasked to address various threats to security in the province such as smuggling, criminality, and illegal drugs. Under the joint task force is Task Group Turista (Tourist), which is responsible for ensuring the safety and security of both tourists and locals in the different tourist sites in the province.
- (6) *Aspirations to become the country's first UNESCO Global Geopark.* Bohol also aspires to be the Philippines' first Global Geopark as designated by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO Global Geoparks are "single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development" ("UNESCO Global Geoparks" n.d.). This action was initiated by the University of the Philippines School of Urban and Regional Planning (UP SURP) with the help of the University of Hamburg, Germany. This initiative will be a big step forward in the conservation of the geological and natural resources of the province. The Bohol Tourism Office recently held a workshop in view of finalizing their submission to UNESCO.
- (7) *Sustainable practices in the private sector.* The Bohol Tourism Office's partners from the private sector, especially resorts and hotels, also integrate sustainable practices in running their businesses. Some resorts in Bohol are recipients of the ASEAN Green Hotel Award and the ANAHAW-Philippine Sustainable Tourism Certification, given by the Department

of Tourism and the Zero Carbon Resorts for Sustainable Tourism Project.

- (8) *Other emerging concerns.* There are still many challenges to be faced by the province, including managing the prices of tourism services, crimes, high costs of basic commodities, and traffic conditions. The promotion of seamless travel, preserving peace and security, implementing power and water sustainability, waste management systems, and investments are other emerging areas of concern with regard to ensuring sustainable tourism development.

Cabarrus (2018) said that all these tasks are looming right before them, but they feel there is always hope and that in due time, all these problems will be properly responded to. They believe that they can do these with the help and cooperation of their partners in Bohol and in Cebu. As she said in the roundtable discussion, “You could possibly support and help us in our task of developing the province into a more sustainable destination.”

Applying the SWOT analysis in the tourism conditions in Cebu and Bohol

With Cebu and Bohol being among the top destinations visited by tourists in the Philippines, tourism is an economic growth driver of these two provinces in Central Visayas. Negros Oriental and Siquijor, while having lower tourist arrivals compared to their neighbors, are now gaining some ground in the tourism industry.

It is best to apply the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) method of analysis in discussing the tourism industry of Cebu and Bohol. Cebu’s strengths lie in its MICE tourism, beaches and resorts, community-based ecotourism sites in its towns, religious festivals, and food products and souvenirs. Its weaknesses are the lack of coordination between government agencies, the lack of enforcement of environmental codes, the presence of negative aspects of tourism, the seemingly lack of equity in enjoying the

economic benefits from tourism, and the lack of art and cultural tourism spaces. It has opportunities in providing cultural spaces for cultural entertainment, development of food and souvenir markets for tourists, building art museums and art spaces for tourists, developing community-based ecotourism in the highlands of Cebu, developing other types of tourism such as agricultural tourism, culinary tourism, and faith-based tourism, and reinforcing its heritage and education tourism. The threats to Cebu's tourism industry include the lack of good governance in addressing urban problems in Metro Cebu (like worsening traffic congestion), the lack of an efficient solid waste management, the absence of air quality controls, the evident lack of cleanliness in the sidewalks, streets, and overpasses of Cebu, and issues in water sustainability.

Bohol has numerous strengths as well. Among these are strong partnerships among the stakeholders of tourism in the province, community-based ecotourism sites, the existence of regulatory codes to ensure sustainability, the provision and strengthening of livelihood programs connected to tourism industries, and the restoration of heritage structures that provide livelihood to the people. Opportunities also abound with the newly opened Panglao International Airport, greater connectivity to the country and to the world, an increase in employment and the improvement of its seaports, increasing tourist arrivals, its poverty alleviation measures and livelihood opportunities for its people, and the development of agricultural tourism. The threats to Bohol's tourism industry are the negative aspects of tourism, criminality, high costs of basic commodities, traffic congestion, threats to peace and security, power and water sustainability, quality of sea water, the increasing volume of solid wastes that need to be managed, and threat to marine resources.

Overall, the strengths of the two provinces need to be maintained and reinforced. Their weaknesses have to be addressed and transformed into opportunities. Opportunities have to be taken advantage of and given attention, while threats have to be urgently given attention lest they negatively affect the community and the tourism industry.

Summary, conclusion, and recommended research topics

(A) Concerns, challenges, and opportunities for sustainable tourism in Central Visayas

- (1) Do the benefits from tourism apply only to a few provinces and sectors in the community? Are tourism's economic benefits inclusive of the poorer sectors in society? Does it alleviate poverty in communities where tourist sites and attractions are located?
- (2) Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are continuing concerns as some of the tourism sites are vulnerable to the effects of rising sea levels and environmental changes. There is now a growing trend of strict adherence to environmental laws.
- (3) The environmental impact and carrying capacity of tourism sites are things that should also be looked into. Housing and logistics monitoring boards should consider and incorporate carrying capacities in the development of their comprehensive land use plans. LGUs should also include the monitoring and maintenance of carrying capacities of tourist sites in crafting ordinances and policies.
- (4) What are the effects of traffic congestion, inefficient traffic management and public transportation, high air pollution levels, and inadequate solid waste management on the tourism industry in Cebu?
- (5) There are four concerns on socio-cultural dimension of tourism:
 - (a) The first concern is the dark side of tourism, which refers to prostitution and cyberpornography. With the sun, sand, and sea come cheap sex in the Philippines. It is a grim reality that foreigners come to the country for cheap sex.
 - (b) The second concern is the development of high value-added products that can be sold to tourists. The production and selling of high value-added products

should be developed so that tourists will come to the Philippines not just for the sun, sand, and sea, but also for these products. Cebu should be the center of trade and tourists must be encouraged to spend on products like high quality souvenirs and food delicacies.

- (c) The third concern is the need to promote the art scene in Cebu which tourists can patronize. There is a lack of art spaces and artists' hubs in the province. There is also a lack of government support for art and artists, as seen in the absence of public art sculptures, low budget allocation for art commissions and structures, and the absence of art museums in Cebu City.
- (d) The fourth is the challenge to develop cultural tourism and ecotourism in Cebu City. Spaces for food and souvenir markets and for cultural entertainment for tourists should be built. There are also opportunities for developing alternative tourism services such as agricultural tourism, heritage tourism, and art tourism.
- (6) Institutional support for sustainable tourism is undertaken by the DOT and the NEDA in terms of connectivity through infrastructure development, inclusive growth, and fostering a culture of sustainable tourism that is beneficial for the environment, the industry, visitors, and host communities.

(B) Strategies, opportunities, and challenges for sustainable tourism in the province of Bohol

- (1) These are factors considered in Bohol's journey to achieving sustainability:
 - (a) The first is community involvement through the Purok Power Movement, which started as an information communication strategy and has now evolved into a mode of translating and delivering government projects and programs at the local level.
 - (b) The second is strong partnership with stakeholders, where leadership is shared and involves relevant

stakeholders. The administration of the province should be a partnership between government officials and the people in the community. There is also strong legislative support in terms of involved and shared governance.

- (c) The third is open access to information focused towards inclusive growth and community-based tourism, which serves as a platform for including those in the rural areas into the province's tourism industry.
 - (d) The fourth is environmental protection, as seen in the provincial environmental code that has been recently revised to adapt to new challenges and issues facing Bohol's environment and natural resources. Sustainable tourism development has always been the major thrust of the provincial government as it is the main socio-economic growth driver of the province.
- (2) The following are strategies taken by the provincial government of Bohol to ensure sustainable tourism in the province:
- (a) Strengthening tourism livelihood programs through capacitating peoples' organizations that are managing tourism activities in communities;
 - (b) Establishing good working relationships with national government agencies;
 - (c) Forging partnerships with tourism industry employers such as hotels, inns, and resorts, among others;
 - (d) Developing agri-tourism so that farmers will not only earn from their produce, but also from supplemental activities from tourism;
 - (e) Putting in place regulatory codes and policies to control some aspects of the tourism industry;
 - (f) Promoting advocacies such as 'barrier-free tourism' and stopping child prostitution and human trafficking in tourism-related programs;

- (g) Enacting and implementing the Bohol Environment Code;
 - (h) Providing infrastructure support by virtue of Republic Act No. 9446 that considers Bohol's roads as tourism roads;
 - (i) Providing reinforcements for ecotourism sites and services;
 - (j) Developing environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socially equitable tourism programs for local communities; and
 - (k) Building strong partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector through participatory governance.
- (3) These are some of the challenges and opportunities in pushing for sustainable tourism in Bohol:
- (a) The rise in the number of tourists;
 - (b) The preservation of built heritage;
 - (c) The prospects for tourism in achieving sustainable development and poverty reduction;
 - (d) Partnerships among government agencies, the private sector, and LGUs for environmental sustainability;
 - (e) Ensuring peace and security in the different tourist sites in the province;
 - (f) Bohol's aspirations to become the country's first UNESCO Global Geopark;
 - (g) Sustainable practices in the private sector, especially resorts and hotels;
 - (h) Other emerging concerns such as the prices of tourism services, crimes, high costs of basic commodities, traffic conditions, the promotion of seamless travel, preserving peace and security, implementing power and water sustainability, waste management systems, and investments.

(C) Conclusion

This paper concludes that although measures have been taken by the provinces of Central Visayas, particularly Cebu and Bohol, to achieve ecological, economic, and socio-cultural sustainability, there are still problems, concerns, and challenges that are both specific and common to the provinces. In Cebu, the specific concerns are the lack of art museums, hubs, and spaces; the need to develop cultural entertainment spaces and food and souvenir markets; the need for good governance to ensure the carrying capacity of ecotourism sites; and the need to develop alternative modes of tourism such as agri-tourism and heritage tourism. Meanwhile, Bohol's specific concerns are the restoration of its heritage structures, the challenge for infrastructure to accommodate the increasing number of tourists, addressing the negative aspects of tourism, and the implementation of its tourism and environmental codes to ensure sustainability. Common concerns for Cebu and Bohol include climate change and disaster risk preparedness, growing traffic congestion, water sustainability, solid waste management, maintaining the quality of air and seawater, the preservation of marine resources, the promotion of barrier-free tourism, and the need for an efficient public transportation system.

(D) Research directions

There is a need to investigate the following in future researches:

- (1) The carrying capacity of ecotourism sites and what stakeholders do—especially the LGUs—to ensure and enforce environmental management and protection;
- (2) The impact of traffic problems, high air pollution levels, inefficient public transportation, and inadequate solid waste management on tourists and plans of the LGUs to address these problems;
- (3) Policy researches on socio-cultural concerns on tourism such as the negative side of tourism (including prostitution and human trafficking), the development of high value-

added tourism products, the feasibility of food and souvenir markets and cultural entertainment for local and foreign tourists, the need for artists' hubs and art spaces, the strengthening of heritage tourism, and the development of alternative types of tourism;

- (4) The economic impact of tourism, including the distribution of the benefits of tourism activities and the role of the tourism industry in improving the economic and social conditions of the people in communities;
- (5) The integration of sustainable practices in tourism activities and establishments, such as in hotels, resorts, travel and tour operations, and community-based tourism activities;
- (6) The impact of tourism on local culture, values, and lifestyles of the people in the places and communities located in areas with tourist attractions and destinations;
- (7) The best practices of and challenges faced by people and organizations running the tourism industry; and
- (8) Participatory cultural mapping and the establishment of cultural and heritage centers in Central Visayas.

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Appendix A

Number of local and Asian tourists in Central Visayas, 2017

The table below shows the number of local and Asian tourists who visited Central Visayas from January to December 2017. Cebu was the top destination, followed by Bohol, Negros Oriental, and Siquijor.

Country of Residence	Cebu	Bohol	Negros Oriental	Siquijor	Total 2017	% Share from Total Arrivals	Total 2016	Growth Rate
PHILIPPINE RESIDENTS								
Filipino Nationality	2,590,164	664,541	696,338	52,392	4,003,435	57.40%	3,564,417	12.32%
Foreign Nationality	22,841	22,317	20,055	—	65,213	0.93%	55,524	17.45%
TOTAL PHILIPPINE RESIDENTS	2,613,005	686,858	716,393	52,392	4,068,648	58.33%	3,619,941	12.40%
NON-PHILIPPINE (ASIA) RESIDENTS								
ASEAN								
Brunei	2,038	223	110	—	2,371	0.03%	1,210	95.95%
Cambodia	2,388	423	44	—	2,855	0.04%	986	189.55%
Indonesia	5,747	641	236	10	6,634	0.10%	4,271	55.33%
Laos	1,441	45	33	—	1,519	0.02%	773	100.00%
Malaysia	13,995	1,336	693	34	16,058	0.23%	12,592	27.53%
Myanmar	1,662	99	117	2	1,880	0.03%	1,225	53.47%
Singapore	25,855	2,395	1,203	42	29,495	0.42%	24,687	19.48%
Thailand	9,951	1,009	774	49	11,783	0.17%	8,502	38.59%
Vietnam	3,316	575	197	3	4,091	0.06%	2,962	38.12%
Sub-total	66,393	6,746	3,407	140	76,686	1.10%	57,208	34.05%

Country of Residence	Cebu	Bohol	Negros Oriental	Siquijor	Total 2017	% Share from Total Arrivals	Total 2016	Growth Rate
EAST ASIA								
China	203,718	156,232	52,244	17,112	429,306	6.16%	244,925	75.28%
Hong Kong	19,727	4,590	1,847	199	26,363	0.38%	21,320	23.65%
Japan	390,796	13,523	3,591	656	408,566	5.86%	369,860	10.47%
Korea	802,298	87,519	5,589	370	895,776	12.84%	842,985	6.26%
Taiwan	46,995	23,571	982	191	71,739	1.03%	42,261	69.75%
Sub-total	1,463,534	285,435	64,253	18,528	1,831,750	26.26%	1,521,351	20.40%
SOUTH ASIA								
Bangladesh	1,378	38	14	1	1,431	0.02%	663	115.84%
India	13,089	1,053	527	35	14,704	0.21%	12,114	21.38%
Iran	2,885	249	182	—	3,316	0.05%	1,640	102.20%
Nepal	1,971	26	44	—	2,041	0.03%	853	139.27%
Pakistan	1,473	113	50	10	1,646	0.02%	1,324	24.32%
Sri Lanka	1,387	449	46	—	1,882	0.03%	1,047	79.75%
Sub-total	22,183	1,928	863	46	25,020	0.36%	17,641	41.83%

Country of Residence	Cebu	Bohol	Negros Oriental	Siquijor	Total 2017	% Share from Total Arrivals	Total 2016	Growth Rate
MIDDLE EAST								
Bahrain	1,468	97	67	—	1,632	0.02%	1,101	48.23%
Egypt	1,654	83	133	38	1,908	0.03%	936	103.85%
Israel	5,285	2,593	561	749	9,188	0.13%	8,098	13.46%
Jordan	1,347	195	54	—	1,596	0.02%	902	76.94%
Kuwait	2,527	400	162	2	3,091	0.04%	2,047	51.00%
Saudi Arabia	11,104	822	228	9	12,163	0.17%	11,572	5.11%
United Arab Emirates	4,985	1,560	67	4	6,616	0.09%	5,069	30.52%
Sub-total	28,370	5,750	1,272	802	36,194	0.52%	29,725	21.76%

Appendix B

Number of tourists from America, Europe, and Australasia/Pacific in Central Visayas, 2017

The table below shows the number of tourists America, Europe, and Australasia/Pacific who visited Central Visayas from January to December 2017. The rankings for the provinces remain the same.

Country of Residence	Cebu	Bohol	Negros Oriental	Siquijor	Total 2017	% Share from Total Arrivals	Total 2016	Growth Rate
NON-PHILIPPINE (OUTSIDE ASIA) RESIDENTS								
NORTH AMERICA								
Canada	31,363	6,833	4,082	806	43,084	0.62%	35,281	22.12%
Mexico	6,498	1,415	257	36	8,206	0.12%	4,796	71.10%
USA	176,284	23,706	17,014	2,792	219,796	3.15%	201,222	9.23%
Sub-total	214,145	31,954	21,353	3,634	271,086	3.89%	241,299	12.34%
SOUTH AMERICA								
Argentina	2,245	721	133	3	3,102	0.04%	1,570	97.58%
Brazil	3,762	968	448	38	5,216	0.07%	3,461	50.71%
Colombia	2,218	353	152	17	2,740	0.04%	1,290	112.40%
Peru	1,411	61	113	2	1,587	0.02%	518	100.00%
Venezuela	1,385	268	91	—	1,744	0.03%	430	100.00%
Sub-total	11,021	2,371	937	997	15,326	0.22%	7,269	110.84%

Country of Residence	Cebu	Bohol	Negros Oriental	Siquijor	Total 2017	% Share from Total Arrivals	Total 2016	Growth Rate
WESTERN EUROPE								
Austria	5,174	1,390	821	246	7,631	0.11%	6,491	17.56%
Belgium	5,683	2,358	700	493	9,234	0.13%	8,085	14.21%
France	23,744	15,726	6,651	4,136	50,257	0.72%	42,961	16.98%
Germany	36,306	14,038	4,613	3,475	58,432	0.84%	46,918	24.54%
Luxembourg	1,551	315	89	8	1,963	0.03%	1,680	16.85%
Netherlands	11,325	3,423	1,148	1,319	17,215	0.25%	16,260	5.87%
Switzerland	16,036	5,071	1,663	990	23,760	0.34%	20,256	17.30%
Sub-total	99,819	42,321	15,685	10,667	168,492	2.42%	142,651	18.11%
NORTHERN EUROPE								
Denmark	7,584	3,242	955	749	12,530	0.18%	11,364	10.26%
Finland	4,937	1,435	404	183	6,959	0.10%	5,110	36.18%
Ireland	8,413	1,747	351	174	10,685	0.15%	7,197	48.46%
Norway	12,833	2,561	1,016	138	16,548	0.24%	16,769	-1.32%
Sweden	12,664	4,978	964	591	19,197	0.28%	16,169	18.73%
UK	37,247	8,563	1,741	1,933	49,484	0.71%	43,243	14.43%
Sub-total	83,678	22,526	5,431	3,768	115,403	1.65%	99,852	15.57%

Country of Residence	Cebu	Bohol	Negros Oriental	Siquijor	Total 2017	% Share from Total Arrivals	Total 2016	Growth Rate
SOUTHERN EUROPE								
Greece	2,931	482	175	8	3,596	0.05%	1,562	130.22%
Italy	11,136	4,724	1,210	350	17,420	0.25%	14,121	23.36%
Portugal	2,557	708	158	59	3,482	0.05%	2,061	68.95%
Spain	9,365	6,315	1,993	2,573	20,246	0.29%	16,387	23.55%
Serbia and Montenegro	1,614	1,324	26	—	2,964	0.04%	367	100.00%
Sub-total	27,603	13,553	3,562	2,990	47,708	0.68%	34,498	38.29%
EASTERN EUROPE								
CIS	1,133	255	61	—	1,449	0.02%	479	202.51%
Poland	4,151	3,418	440	717	8,726	0.13%	6,175	41.31%
Russia	12,428	6,060	718	181	19,387	0.28%	15,519	24.92%
Sub-total	17,712	9,733	1,219	898	29,562	0.42%	22,173	33.32%

Country of Residence	Cebu	Bohol	Negros Oriental	Siquijor	Total 2017	% Share from Total Arrivals	Total 2016	Growth Rate
AUSTRALASIA/PACIFIC								
Australia	57,399	9,680	3,521	1,124	71,724	1.03%	63,627	12.73%
Guam	2,968	423	51	—	3,442	0.05%	2,026	69.89%
Nauru	1,156	40	23	—	1,219	0.02%	234	420.94%
New Zealand	7,366	1,679	646	121	9,812	0.14%	7,643	28.38%
Papua New Guinea	1,688	2,173	11	—	3,872	0.06%	1,101	251.68%
Sub-total	70,577	13,995	4,252	1,245	90,069	1.29	74,631	20.69%

Source: Planning and Statistics Division, Department of Tourism Region 7

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