



Where
**endless
stories**
begin.

A decorative graphic consisting of a blue and green wavy shape containing white icons of a cross, a sun, a star, a mountain, and a circular emblem with a figure.

Luminare 2023

Department of Tourism - Region III
Accomplishment Report



Message from the Regional Director

We are an open book, as every government entity should be. And in this first edition of this journal, we are opening our pages to share our journey towards reaching some remarkable feats for 2023. Welcome to “Luminare”, the Official Accomplishment Report of the Department of Tourism - Region III.

Luminare, which means ‘to give light; an enlightener,’ serves not only as a comprehensive record of our achievements but also as a testament to the collaborative spirit that illuminates our region’s commitment to tourism excellence. In these pages, you will find a chronicle of our endeavors, triumphs, and the tireless efforts put forth by the entire DOT RIII and our stakeholders.

The tourism landscape is ever-evolving, and in the midst of challenges, our region has demonstrated resilience and adaptability. As the Regional Director, I am privileged to lead a team that consistently strives for innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability in promoting the rich cultural and natural treasures of our region.

Our accomplishments extend beyond mere statistics; they represent stories of the communities uplifted, the livelihoods strengthened, and the unique heritage of Central Luzon shared to the world. These are not mere pages nor accomplishments; these are narratives of successful initiatives, impactful partnerships, and unwavering dedication of our tourism champions.

This journal is an amalgamation of our shared journey towards a thriving tourism industry. As we delve into its content, let us be reminded that these are not milestones achieved by the DOT RIII alone but of the collaborative efforts of our regional partners who have helped shape our success, in one way or another.

We are starting this legacy with the hope of reminding everyone of the great things that we can achieve when we work together. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has played a role in reaching our goals. May this inspire continued collaboration, spark new ideas, and reinforce our collective commitment to fostering a tourism landscape that empowers everyone.

Like I said, we are an open book, and everyone is welcome to begin his own version of story. And in a place where endless stories begin, we invite you to live – eat, dive, play, revel, fall in love – and tell the tale.

Love Central Luzon, Love the Philippines.

Richard G. Daenos, Ph.D.
FBE, FAPIEM, IVPF, DFRIT, DFRIEDr

A Year of Feats:

Office of the Regional Director and ManCom lead DOT RIII Meetings to Success

In 2023, the Department of Tourism (DOT) Region III Office of the Regional Director and ManCom led more than a few projects and activities that have concluded triumphantly. These activities include regional director meetings, full council meetings and management reviews. Through these meetings, the department is able to align all regional offices with their implementation efforts for more efficient and effective tourism initiatives.

Additionally, the department can assess the overall performance of the tourism industry and identify possible areas of improvement and the impacts, trends and issues that affect it.

Regional Director Meetings

To kickstart the year, the members of the office traversed across the country and held its very first RD meeting in Cebu City with a presentation on DRRM handling of regional offices and the office's communication process flow during a disaster. A discussion was also held regarding the alignment of PAPs of the DOT attached agencies with regional offices.

Half way through the year, the office held its second RD meeting in Tacloban City. With the theme R.O.U.T.E.S: Regional Opportunities for Unifying Tourism Transportation Efforts and Strategies, the second RD meeting gathered together stakeholders from the transport sector to discuss significant topics such as route development and its role in driving the economic growth of a region.

Venturing northwards, the office held its third meeting in Batangas to discuss Advancing Air Connectivity for Dynamic Tourism Growth to empower the regions to create a cohesive vision for air travel. During the meeting, the crucial opportunity to bring together key players in the transportation industry was highlighted in order to drive focus on the essential aspects of air connectivity as well as route development.

Finally, the office caps off the year with its final RD meeting in Manila to discuss other products and priorities of the DOT such as golf tourism, film tourism and sports tourism. The DOT also conducted a performance assessment of the regional offices to help the latter in designing their respective action plans.



RDC Full Council Meetings

The office of the regional director has also carried out all four quarterly RDC full council meetings in 2023. The RDC full council meetings shed light on important topics such as the development of a Regional Tourism Development Plan for Central Luzon and TIEZA or Infra-related projects. During the first RDC full council meeting, the office led a presentation on the department's regional development plan for Central Luzon for 2023 to 2028. Alongside this is the budget proposal of the infrastructure, economic, development administration and social sectors agencies for FY 2024, as presented by the Sectoral Committee Resolutions.

The second RDC full council meeting discussed the 2023 to 2028 communication strategy of the Central Luzon regional development plan. The meeting also covered the guidelines on preparing the 2023 to 2028 Regional Development Investment Program, the 2023 National Crime Prevention program, the Central Luzon regional priority programs, which include courses for students looking to pursue CHED scholarships, and starting an eco-system that leverages opportunities and networks for further growth of Central Luzon.

The third RDC full council meeting touched on the 2023 to 2028 investment program for Central Luzon, the request for the extension of the implementation, change in scope and increase in cost for the Balog-Balog Multi-Purpose project and the phase 2 of the NIA. A highlight of the meeting are the LGUs that received Central Luzon's share of the DOE energy regulations no. 1-94. Finally, the El Nino Plan of DA 3 for Central Luzon was also discussed at length during the meeting.

On the last RDC full council meeting, topics such as the establishment of Tarlac Provincial Science High School, Bataan priority projects under the Tourism Road Infrastructure Program of DPWH, transportation and modernization masterplan of the province of Bataan, Pang-argaryong tulay para sa bagong bayanihan magsasaka bridges project of the DAR and HB 8841 of the Creation of Bulacan Ecozone Law were discussed and approved.

Management Reviews

The office has also held two management review meetings to evaluate the performance of the tourism industry at various levels. The first meeting was about the performance and effectiveness of the QMS and the results of its internal audit, the internal and external issues of support to operations of the different regional offices, the status of the tourism industry so far, the status of hiring and training development, status of infrastructure, adequacy of the offices' resources, satisfaction on the services provided by external providers, budget status of DOT and COA report, and possible opportunities for improvement.

The second review meeting covered the same areas but also touched on the department's planning and budgeting thrust for FY 2024, guidelines on the monthly disbursement program and procurement timeline. The Commission on Audit (COA) also led a discussion on the updated guidelines for the prevention and disallowance of irregular, unnecessary, excessive, extravagant and unconscionable expenditures.

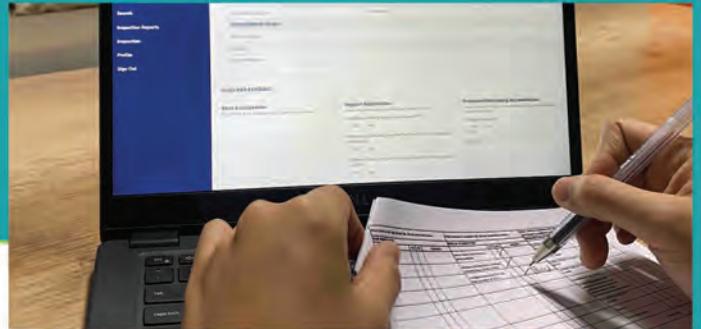
DOT RIII Pioneers Digitalized Accreditation Inspection Monitoring System

Aligned with the agency's strategic direction on digital transformation, the DOT RIII Tourism Regulations Division (TRD) pioneered the Accreditation Inspection Monitoring System (AIMS), the first regional office of the department to fully digitalize the accreditation application procedure by streamlining the report generation process. With innovation and digital transformation, the division takes advantage of technology to design a digital system that will provide ease to users to process applications, reducing lead time in report generation and increasing productivity and efficiency.

This project hopes to promote a more convenient accreditation process for all stakeholders. Through the digital accreditation inspection monitoring system, Accreditation Offices (AOs) will be able to generate inspection reports faster and more efficiently. This system will help in cutting down the processing time in the overall accreditation process.

The project was commissioned in May 2023 and was in line with enhancing and redesigning the existing website of the department. The accreditation inspection monitoring system is a comprehensive web-based tool that will cover several modules, each catering to different aspects of DOT RIII's accreditation process, including the user module, content management system, digital signature, inspection report, and attachment module. A highlight among these modules is the role-based access and digital signature.

Through the development of AIMS, the DOT RIII is confident that it will be able to continue to deliver effective and quality accreditation services. Likewise, the division will strive to continuously enhance the AIMS to adapt to the ever-evolving digital landscape.



DOT RIII Spearheads 12 Accreditation Caravans Across Central Luzon

As the DOT RIII strives to continuously improve its services, the Tourism Regulations Division (TRD) was able to successfully conduct twelve (12) accreditation caravans all over Central Luzon for 2023. The accreditation caravan aims to bring the regulatory services of the agency closer to the tourism stakeholders specifically in geographically and connectivity-challenged locations. Through the accreditation caravan, the stakeholders are provided with an orientation on the DOT Accreditation process and its importance. A step-by-step guide is provided on how tourism stakeholders can apply for and receive the benefits of the DOT accreditation.

Applicants during caravan can avail express services from online application and evaluation of documents, to physical inspection of the facility. The goal of the caravan is to release accreditation certificates to qualified and compliant stakeholders by the end of the caravan.

Through collaborative efforts of the TRD and local government units, the office managed to conduct a total of 12 caravans in the following cities and municipalities: Porac, Guagua and City of San Fernando in Pampanga; Angeles City; City of San Jose Del Monte in Bulacan; Tarlac City; Baler, Dipaculao, Dinalungan, and Dingalan in Aurora; and San Felipe and San Antonio in Zambales.

Throughout 2023, the TRD rigorously processed accreditation applications from primary and secondary tourism enterprises. These primary enterprises include accommodation establishments, travel and tour agencies, tour operators, tour guides, land transport operators, and Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) venues and facilities. Secondary enterprises consist of restaurants, spas, museums, firing ranges, department stores, souvenir shops, dental clinics, and tourism recreation centers. The accreditation caravan is an annual project of the DOT to continuously improve and sustain the tourism industry in Central Luzon.



To see the updated list of DOT-accredited tourism enterprises in Central Luzon and learn more about the DOT accreditation process and benefits, visit the website www.visitcentralluzon.com/accreditation-references.

DOT-Accredited Tourism Enterprises in RIII

Increased by 9.28% in 2023

With the agency's thrust to encourage global competitiveness and ensure the quality of tourism services and facilities in Central Luzon, the DOT RIII TRD accredited a total of 1,024 tourism related enterprises (TRE) in Central Luzon in 2023. This accomplishment accounts for a 9.28 percent increase in the total number of accredited TREs in the region and exceeded the initial 5 percent target increase for 2023 based on the Quality Objective for Quality Management System. This increase is one of the most significant and noteworthy achievements of the division in 2023.

The DOT Accreditation is a certification that officially recognizes a tourism enterprise as compliant with the minimum standards for the operation of tourism services and uphold DOT's standards. The DOT RIII continues to prescribe and regulate standards for the continuous operation of the tourism industry through the DOT accreditation.



Why do you travel?

For most, traveling is an opportunity to witness and experience new things and move beyond their borders. Others find healing in being surrounded by unfamiliar yet beautiful things. Traveling allows them let go of some challenging experiences to make way for greater ones. We may have different reasons for seeking new sceneries and venturing out of our comfort zones, but in the end we all arrive in the same destination: telling stories.

Stories like our most favorite parts of our latest adventure, the ones we'll never forget, the ones that gave us a new perspective on life and somehow changed us for the better. Stories of wonder, culture, friendship, hope and more importantly, stories of interconnectedness, of how our experiences link us to the people around us. If you're trying something or going somewhere new, trust that the locals of the destination you're in can guide you having only the best experience. They are the reason the stories that we will soon tell exist and at the same time, you are the reason that their stories and culture persist.

This is the vision of the DOT RIII during the inception of its newest tourism brand—the significance of our stories of travel and how our experiences can create wondrous impacts when shared, thus, the slogan **“Where Endless Stories Begin”**. Endless signifying our human interconnectedness and how the stories we tell never truly have an ending because it can be built upon by others' experiences.



**Endless
Stories
Begin**
in Central Luzon as DOT RIII
Launches **New Tourism Brand**

The new slogan is also the precise reflection of Central Luzon: an open book where everyone is welcome to write their one-of-a-kind story, regardless of who they are or their background—whether they are a tourist, entrepreneur, retiree, surfer, foodie, historian or farmer among others. And with Central Luzon's numerous specialties, from art, music and cuisine to tourist experiences that anyone of any age will love, you will find it impossible to leave the region without being in awe of its culture and without something astonishing to share.

Where are we going?

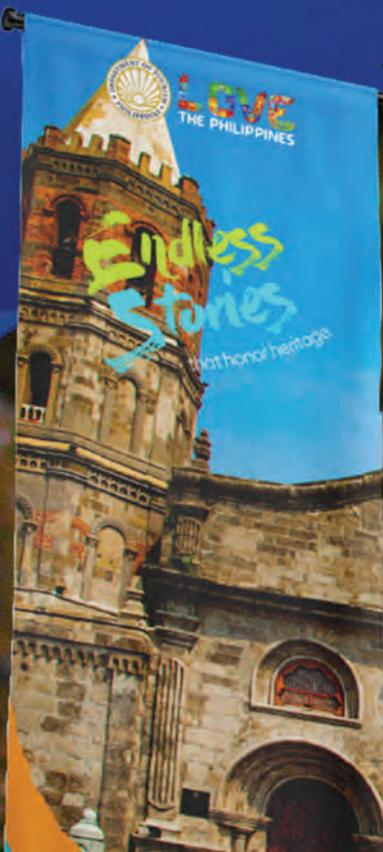
Central Luzon is very accessible—whether you're coming from land, air or even sea. It is the only region that meets both the east and west of the Philippines, literally connecting people from different parts of the country. Because of this openness, Central Luzon is a place of endless boundaries.

Countless wonders and surprises

From the stunning surfing scenes of Aurora, the breathtaking natural wonders of Bataan, the vibrant marine life of Zambales, the captivating mountains of Nueva Ecija to the delectable experiences of Pampanga, the diverse cultures in Tarlac and the historical sites of Bulacan, Central Luzon is truly a plethora of tourism marvels that will satisfy all your five senses. Each province will surprise you with unique experiences so astounding that the effect will stay with you for a long time. With its strong tourism offerings, Central Luzon will fight to be one of your lifetime favorites in your list of travels.

Where the past and the present meet

Central Luzon is a region of histories. The love of its people for its history and culture is reflected in the tourism sites that it is proud to share and the authenticity it mixes into its cuisine. A journey to Central Luzon is also like a journey to the past with its dedication to maintain the spectacles of history and merge it with the opportunities of the present and future.



The heart of Central Luzon

Beyond the awe-striking sceneries, offerings, and culture, at the very heart of Central Luzon is its people and their warm hospitality. The unwavering Filipino brand of welcomeness is loud and vibrant in the region and assures travelers that upon stepping on Central Luzon's ground, you are in for an adventure full of curiosity, beauty, wonder, and greatness.

Welcome to



Where
**endless
stories
begin.**



LISTEN TO WESB JINGLE

DOT RIII Bags Awards

During North Luzon Travel
Expo and North Phil Tourism
and Travel Expo 2023

The DOT RIII ended 2023 with a bang as it brought home three awards from two significant tourism events, the North Luzon Travel Expo (NLTE) on November 25 to 27, 2023, and the North Philippines Tourism and Travel Expo (NorthPhil Expo) on December 16 to 18, 2023.

The North Luzon Travel Expo (NLTE) 2023, which took place at CAP Convention Center in Camp John Hay at Baguio City, is a collective project of four DOT northern region offices namely, DOT-Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Region I, Region II, and Region III, in partnership with the Association of Travel and Tours Management in the Cordilleras (ATTIC). After a successful launch in 2022, which was then named North Luzon Travel Fair 2022, the DOT decided to hold its second edition this year with DOT-CAR as the host region.

Meanwhile, NorthPhil: The North Philippines Tourism and Travel Expo (NorthPhil Expo) 2023, held in SM Clark Pampanga, is an event organized by the Association of Tourism Officers of Central Luzon (ATOCEL) and the Philippines Exhibitions and Trade Corp. (PETCO). This year's event serves as the travel expo's grand comeback after being on hiatus during the pandemic.

Showing the Best of Central Luzon's at the NLTE 2023

During the NLTE 2023, guests witnessed exquisite exhibitions and engaged in several activities spanned throughout the three-day expo. Those with a penchant for traditional and historical Filipino fashion were given the chance to admire the beauty of local weaving and Philippine textiles through the Hibla ng Lahing Filipino, a fashion parade and gala dinner. Meanwhile, those looking for a more chill experience were able to enjoy the expo's Art in the Park, an art exchange and music show.

Set to bring the spotlight to Central Luzon's artistry and craftsmanship, the DOT RIII went above and beyond during the tourism expo. The office gathered local artists and performers from Bulacan and Pampanga to have them showcase their commendable talent. Artists from Pampanga such as sculptor and painter Arnel Garcia, Kulitan calligrapher Lucio Sison, and miniature artist Nhoda Munoz, along with Puni artist Marichelle Santos from Malolos City, Bulacan all wowed guests with their crafts and talents. Kapampangan artist and culture advocate Peter de Vera and Sinukwan Kapampangan also graced the expo with their presence and a stunning rendition of "Kinang Pilipinas".

Additionally, Sabutan designers from Baler, Aurora, Disenyo Pandi's Gladys De Leon, and House of Pidayit's and Kapampangan pride Philip D. Torres were all also



present during the expo to represent Central Luzon in the Hibla ng Lahing Filipino exhibit, showing the best of Central Luzon's creativity and passion for local fashion.

A highlight of the expo is the DOT RIII's pavilion, which was designed with everything the region is best known for. Approaching the pavilion, you'll first take notice of the intricately-made haligi or a tall arch made from Singkaban Bamboo Art, which is an example of the livelihood of some locals in Bulacan. Upon entering the pavilion, you'll be greeted by the dancing lights of Pampanga's signature vibrant parols from the City of San Fernando and Angeles City's Lubenas and the delicious aroma of a Kapampangan feast of the province's most delectable cuisines and delicacies, prepared by Chef Howard Dizon for guests to enjoy.

After leaving the crowd in awe with the pavilion's loud and proud representation of Central Luzon's culture, the DOT RIII team triumphantly brought home the Best Pavilion award.

Endless Stories Begin at North Phil Expo 2023

DOT RIII has been a consistent participant of the North Phil Expo and for 2023, the regional office comes with something big and new to offer guests. Following the soft launch of DOT RIII's new tourism brand, "Where Endless Stories Begin", the regional office's booth at the North Phil Expo featured an exciting brand activation, which involves the participation of visitors and on-looking students. The challenge is simple: All visitors needed to do was to take selfies around the pavilion and post them online with the hashtags #WhereEndlessStoriesBegin and #MyCentralLuzonStory. Those who posted their photos on their Facebook and Instagram stories with the hashtags got to win cool items, including ref magnets, tote bags, and shirts.

By the end of the expo, the DOT RIII took home the Best On-Site Promotion award and bagged the second place for the Best Pavilion award for its unique method of introducing and promoting its new tourism brand and allowing the expo's visitors to be involved in their exhibit.

"It is always a thrill to join the NLTE and the NorthPhil Expo, and coming home with these awards only makes us even more eager to participate in any future events they might have. DOT RIII will continue to uphold the best that Central Luzon has to offer not just to the rest of the Philippines but to the world, because our very own talents, crafts, and cuisine truly deserve the recognition. We thank the people behind the NLTE and the North Phil Expo for this important appreciation and we can't wait to see what's in store for 2024 for them," said Ms. Ronsan M. Pelariza, Chief Tourism Operations Officer.

The NTLE and North Phil Expo 2023 both aim to serve as a platform that bring together industry professionals, stakeholders, and travel enthusiasts from all over the globe and help them discover the best, most unique and captivating tourist destinations in Central Luzon.

In the same year, the DOT RIII has also graced several international business missions, travel fairs and expo with its presence, including Routes Asia in Chiang Mai, Thailand, NET 24 Agents and Educators B2B Global Conference in Vietnam, Arabian Travel Market in Dubai UAE, Japan Business Mission in Osaka and Tokyo, Korea MICE Roadshow in Busan Seoul, and Seatrade Europe in Germany.



Surge in Air and Sea Travel in 2023 to help Bolster Central Luzon Tourism

As the travel and tourism industry continues to rebound and more people are still on a revenge travel high, Clark International Airport (CRK) and governmental agency Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) reported a significant rise in flight and cruise numbers in 2023, even surpassing pre-pandemic figures.

After taking one of the biggest hits during the quarantine period, the travel and tourism industry is seeing a resurgence as people become more determined to return to the road, sky and sea to cross borders and discover new places. And as the DOT RIII continues to drive its efforts in boosting the tourism sector of Central Luzon, international markets have become more inspired to explore the region, resulting in the surge of flights and cruises. With this milestone, a promising recovery can be expected in the aviation and sea travel sector of the Philippines and Central Luzon.

More Travelers Flying from CRK

In 2023, the Luzon International Premiere Airport Development Corporation (LIPAD Corp.) reported impressive data on the flights delivered by CRK. A total of 14,867 flights—5,821 of which are domestic and 9,046 are international—have been recorded, which projects a 162 percent difference from 2022 numbers and a 42 percent recovery from 2019 flight data. On the passenger side, a staggering total of 1,999,542 tourists was recorded by the CRK, 640,381 of which are domestic passengers and 1,359,161 are international travelers. This projects a leap by 160 percent from 2022 flights and a 50 percent recovery from 2019.

A behavior observed among travelers recently is that they have been much keener on exploring domestic locations leading to a surge in domestic flights in the Philippines. For Central Luzon, CRK delivered 5,821 domestic flights, a 281 percent rise from 2022 flights and recovering by 24 percent from 2019. At the same time, those with the palate for something beyond their own borders have aided in raising the numbers of international flights at CRK, even so far as exceeding pre-pandemic numbers by a considerable margin. International travel has increased with 9,046 flights, indicating a 119 percent change from 2022 and recovery by 76 percent compared to numbers in 2019.

This positive surge indicates a resilient recovery for the travel and aviation industry, particularly for CRK, and highlights the industry's unwavering resilience and adaptability in the post-pandemic landscape.

Currently, CRK has a total of 16 airlines; six of which are domestic and eight, international. The domestic airlines are the Philippine Airlines Group, Cebu Pacific Air Group, Philippines Air Asia, AirSWIFT, Royal Air, and a new addition, Sunlight Air. Meanwhile, the available international airlines in CRK are Emirates, Qatar Airways, Scoot, JinAir, JEJU Air and Asiana.

The following are the new international airlines at CRK: Air Busan, EVA Air, STARLUX and Aero-K.

For those seeking to travel domestically, they can opt to fly via CRK for the following destinations: Busuanga, El Nido, Puerto Princesa, Cebu, Bacolod, Caticlan, Iloilo, Davao, Cagayan De Oro, and General Santos. Meanwhile, those who are looking to fly outside of the Philippines can fly via Clark to Dubai, Doha, Singapore, Incheon, Pusan, Cheongju, Narita, Bangkok, Taipei, Hong Kong and Macau.

Cruise Ship Arrivals Return to Subic

Sea travel through cruises also saw a significant surge in 2023, as revealed by SBMA. On October 2, 2023 Liberian-based cruise ship MV Blue Dream Star docked at Subic Bay in its maiden voyage and resumed receiving cruise ship arrivals after a three-year hiatus.

Throughout the six visits, passenger, crew, and net proceed data all projected impressive figures. The first visit, took place on October 12, a total of 993 passengers



and 302 crew disembarked from the cruise ship and showed an estimated total net proceeds of Php589,000.35. On October 16, the SBMA welcomed 973 cruise passengers, 664 of which are passengers and 309 are crew members. The estimated total net proceeds of that day totaled to Php208,401.85. For the third visit on October 24, a total of 1,256-946 passengers and 310 crew—the highest record of cruise passengers yet, docked at Subic Bay with an approximate total net proceeds of Php186,211.85. On October 28, 572 passengers and 303 crew members arrived in Subic Bay with an approximate total net proceeds of Php232,005.74.

The cruise arrival with the highest estimated net proceeds is accounted for the November 1 visit, totaling to Php415,037.74. The ship carried 752 passengers and 303 crew members. Finally, on November 21 came 836 passengers and 285 crew members. The net proceeds of this day are approximately Php163,774.50.

“Despite the challenges of recent years, 2023 signifies a resounding resurgence for the tourism sector. These promising results underscore the collaborative endeavors of our regional office and valued stakeholders in crafting new tourism offerings and showcasing our destinations. As we anticipate continued growth in the year ahead, we eagerly await the opportunities that lie ahead for the industry,” said Ms. Chriselle May S. Yambao, Supervising Tourism Operations Officer.

Industry Skills Program. With this impressive feat, the regional office earned a place among the top performing offices and received several recognitions from the Office of Industry Manpower Development (OIMD).

During the sixth annual Gawad Tagapagsanay: Parangal sa DOT Training Champions, the DOT RIII training team (Jean Piaget Manabat, Nikka Nulud, and Patrick De Leon) alongside Regional Director Richard G. Daenos, PhD bagged the Gawad Pagkilala, the Award for the Most Number of Regular Training Conducted, and Community-Based Tourism Organization Advocate Award. The team was also recognized as the Sectoral Champion for three categories namely: Accommodation, Food/Restaurant, and Farm Tourism.

Spearheaded by the DOT-OIMD and hosted by the DOT-SOCCSKSARGEN, the Gawad Tagapagsanay: Parangal sa DOT Training Champions is an event that recognizes the DOT training champions from all 16 regions of the country and their tireless dedication and hardwork in successfully accomplishing DOT’s mission of uplifting tourism frontliners and rolling out DOT training programs.

The triumphs of all training champions show the DOT’s dedication in empowering tourism workforce, unwavering commitment, and LOVE for the Philippines.



DOT RIII Surpasses

2023 Training Target, Receives Multiple Recognitions

In 2023, the Department of Tourism embarked on an ambitious journey to train 100,000 tourism frontliners across the country under the Filipino Brand of Service Excellence Program. This cascading capability-building program is one of the department’s top priorities as it hopes to continuously support tourism workers by equipping them with relevant industry know-hows significant in raising the bar of the overall tourism experience in the Philippines.

To achieve this, the DOT assigned each regional office to train 6,250 workers from varying tourism sectors, such as accommodation establishments, travel and tour agencies, transport groups, tour guide associations, local government units (LGU), and the academe.



Exceeding the expectations of the department, the DOT RIII managed to deliver more than 11,000 trainees—10,000+ of which were under the FBSE program and 1,000+ from other equally important trainings under the Tourism

Workshops on Local Tourism Development Plan and Tourism Statistics Conducted in Several Areas of RIII

To support and equip private and local government units (LGUs) in preparing and developing their respective Local Tourism Development Plans (LTDP) and capacitate accommodation establishments on the process of gathering various tourism data, the DOT RIII – Planning Unit has conducted workshops and trainings in Bulacan, Bataan, Angeles City, Tarlac City, Zambales and Olongapo City.

The LTDP serves as a framework for LGUs to follow in advancing the state of tourism in their respective areas and accomplishing their mission and vision. It provides policies and approaches that should be aligned in the programs or projects that the LGUs hope to conduct. Meanwhile, the Basic Tourism Statistics Training (BTST) is a workshop provided by the department to help accommodation establishments and LGUs in gathering tourism data such as inventory of tourism attractions, statistics on overnight travelers and same-day visitors using prescribed templates. By being knowledgeable in processing tourism data, accommodations establishments and LGUs are able to evaluate if the policies they've set and the promotions and marketing efforts they've conducted have been sustainable and effective.



It is the aim of the DOT RIII to conduct these training to all LGUs and accommodation establishments within the region. For this batch, Bulacan, Bataan, Angeles City, Tarlac City, Zambales and Olongapo City have all requested and were eager for the regional office to hold the workshops and trainings in their areas.

During the LTDP workshop, the participants gained insights on how to gather data in case they are faced with a challenge of having incomplete information. They were also asked to perform a SWOT analysis and identify problems, objectives, and goals with regards to their LTDP. A highlight of the workshop was the preparation of tourism circuits segment the ranking of tourism attractions within their areas.

For the BTST workshop, participants underwent various activities that equipped them on tourism data gathering, including using and encoding the prescribed template by the DOT, calculating indicators (such as average length of stay, average guest nights and occupancy rate), getting the total tourist arrivals based on overnight travelers, and finally, analyzing all gathered data.

DOT RIII Celebrates Women and Filipino Elderly with Advocacy Campaigns and Capability-Building Workshops

Each year, the world's beliefs and practices evolve. These days people have become more accepting of progressive mindsets that decades ago would have been a taboo topic. Yet, until now outdated thinking and harmful practices still persist. This emphasizes our responsibility to speak out about injustices and pave a way for a safer community for everyone.

In 2023, the DOT RIII conducted several initiatives that underscore the need to protect women from violence, support women's rights and empower senior citizens. These initiatives include DOT RIII's National Women's Month Celebration, a gender sensitivity training, End Violence Against Women campaign, and a familiarization tour for senior citizens.



DOT RIII for Gender Equality

As a way to commend the hardworking women of the agency, the DOT RIII celebrates National Women's Month by conducting a seminar about embracing equity and mental wellness and awareness for the DOT RIII personnel. The seminar was led by Reiner L. Grospe, RN, RSW of the DSWD – Region III. During the discussion, Grospe emphasized how equity empowers women of different situations.

Aside from the webinar, as a treat for its employees, the DOT RIII set up a special “Me Day” consisting of beauty and wellness activities. The activity ran through the whole day to allow the personnel to take a relaxing time off from their daily work. Regional Director Ricard G. Daenos, PhD noted that dedicating oneself for the best of the tourism industry is undoubtedly commendable, however it is just as important to care for oneself and not to neglect their needs. The DOT RIII hopes that the wellness activity will give their employees the relaxation that they deserve and inspire them for the work ahead of them.

Raising the Importance of Gender Sensitivity

A concern among most women is that employers do not treat their employees equally to their male counterparts. The DOT RIII hopes to challenge this by integrating gender mainstreaming in their system. To do this, the DOT RIII conducted a two-day Gender Sensitivity Training for tourism officers for five provinces, including Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Bataan and Zambales.

On the first day, the tourism officers were reviewed on the basic gender and development (GAD) concepts, which incorporated the work of a tourism WORCS officer and the four processes of socialization. The officers engaged in activities and workshops in between talks to help them increase their understanding of the topic.

During the second day of the training, a more comprehensive and deeper view of GAD was discussed along with the legal basis of GAD and the relationship of GAD and tourism. In one of their activities the officers were asked to create a SWOT analysis based on the area and time in their provinces. After analyzing their work, the DOT RIII managed to understand the statues of the officers' provinces and assisted them in thinking of strategies in creating a gender sensitive environment in their workspace and among tourism stakeholders.

Standing up for Violence Against Women

Despite the open conversation on women's rights, violence against women is still rampant in the Philippines. Making its clear stand, the DOT RIII, in partnership with the Municipality of Magalang, Pampanga, held an End Violence Against Women (VAW) campaign, which ran for 18 days, to support the Philippine government's mission to protect the rights of women and girls and to address all forms of gender-based violence.

Activities were conducted to celebrate the 18-day campaign. One of the activities involved inspirational talks. Keynote speeches were given by Hon. Maria Lourdes P. Lacson, mayor of Magalang, Pampanga; Rev. Fr. Dino Albert Pineda, parish priest of San Bartolome Parish, Magalang; and artistic director and choreographer at Sinukwan Kapampangan and founder of Anak Bale-Balayan Museum Peter A. De Vera. A highlight of the activity was illuminating Magalang's iconic tourist spot, Precidencia Magalang, in orange hues to signify DOT RIII's and Magalang's support in promoting the end to violence against women.

Fam-Tour for Senior Citizens of Nueva Ecija

Senior citizens, regardless of their age, are important members of our society and deserve to have their rights upheld as other minorities. This is the message that the DOT RIII hopes get across with their familiarization tour for senior citizens of Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija.

In celebration of the Elderly Filipino week, the DOT RIII gave senior citizens a relaxing treat– a mini tour from Cuyapo to the province of Tarlac. The tour served as an opportunity for the seniors to witness the history and heritage of tour sites in Tarlac. The tour kicked off at Monasteryo de Tarlac, a stunning Catholic monastery on top of Mount Resurrection. During their stay at the monastery, they were also given a quick orientation on healthier aging and the best ways to minimize the impact of dementia.



Following this was a visit to the Museo ng Tarlac, where they were able to appreciate the paintings of local artists, and the Red Slab Pottery in Victoria, Tarlac, for a pottery making experience. Finally, the tour concluded with a visit to Tarlac's iconic tourist destination, the annual Belenismo, where they saw astonishing Christmas decorations and displays.

With these initiatives, the regional office hopes to shine a light and initiate conversations on these pressing topics and encourage more people to participate in creating a kinder and inclusive environment for everyone to thrive in.

DOT RIII Partnerships Ignite Passion for Sports, Creativity, Faith, and Heritage

Empowering people to follow their passions and thrive in doing what they love, the DOT RIII has partnered up with organizations and key individuals to conduct passion-forward activities. In 2023, DOT RIII spearheaded the Association Internationale pour le Developpement de l'Apnee (AIDA) Philippines National Freediving Pool Championship; the Creativity as a Tool for Education, Cultural Expression, and Leadership webinar; the first-ever Food Talks 2023: Celebrating Filipino Culinary Identity; and Heritage Talks online series.

The DOT RIII and Clark Development Corporation Tourism Department also together hosted the Sagrada Pampanga: A Kapampangan Sacred Art Exhibit and Healing Performance. Through these, individuals of various backgrounds all got a chance to showcase their talent and gain new learnings from significant people in their respective fields.

Gathering Freedivers from the Philippines and the World

Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) and the DOT RIII, in partnership with the Association Internationale pour le Developpement de l'Apnee (AIDA) Philippines, held the AIDA Philippines National Freediving Pool Championship, the country's very first national-level freediving competition with more than 30 freedivers competing for the championship title. The first-of-its-kind contest was held in the New Clark City Aquatics Center in Capas, Tarlac.

With this milestone, the DOT RIII launched the "Travel Breathe Dive" Program that aims to elevate scuba and freediving in the region by including water sports such as diving in their holistic, sustainable, and inclusive tourism product offerings. The program also aims to promote Central Luzon as a choice destination for diving professionals and enthusiasts. With the presence of a world-class Aquatic Center, New Clark City and Central Luzon are primed to be one of the pool freediving hubs in the country and a top sport complex choice for the freediving community.

Upholding Filipino Creativity

Celebrating the Philippine Creative Industries Month (PCIM) 2023 and the commendable talents of Filipinos, the DOT RIII hosted a Facebook webinar titled "Creativity as a Tool for Education, Cultural Expression, and Leadership", which featured discussions and inspiring dialogues about the power of creativity in shaping perspectives and strategies. The webinar touched on the important topic of how creativity significantly influences education, cultural expression and leadership.

The webinar was hosted by Ruston Banal, an interdisciplinary artist and a three-time winner of Ani ng Dangal by the National Commission for the Culture and the Arts. With this initiative, the DOT RIII hopes to ignite the creative spirit of its industry stakeholders and provide an avenue where they can gain new viewpoints, creative ideas and approaches for working and inspiring positive thinking from industry experts.

Recognizing Food and Culinary Heritage as Tourism Boosters

In partnership with the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Educators of the Philippines (COHREP) – Region III and in celebration of the National Food Month (Buwan ng Kalutong Pilipino), the DOT RIII spearheaded the very first Food Talks, a panel discussion about the important role of food in Central Luzon's cultural heritage.

A distinguished panel of speakers made up of Chefs Jam R. Melcor, Heinz D. Pelayo, and Howard D. Dizon, and three-time Ani ng Dangal awardee Ruston O. Banal Jr. graced the event with their presence and shared their personal insights and experiences on various topics, including embracing slow food, the similarities and difference among regional food, starting a restaurant business gradually, and appreciating the tasteful heirloom of culinary heritage.

To solidify DOT RIII's commitment to protect Central Luzon's culinary heritage, a ceremonial turnover of Food Mapping outputs also took place during the event. The turnover of outputs to Pampanga, Bulacan, DepEd, and CHED hopes to safeguard the culinary heritage of the region and preserve it for future generations to discover, love and share.



Working Towards Preserving and Protecting our Natural Heritage

For National Heritage Month 2023, the DOT RIII partnered with ALCULTURA, Inc. and OCSEAN Philippines for a two-day online series titled, "Heritage Talks". Heritage Talks aims to bring together individuals and encourage them to participate in programs geared towards raising awareness about our cultural heritage and protecting our Filipino identity.

On the first run of the webinar, Dr. Laya Boquiren-Gonzales of the University of the Philippines (UP) presented the topic, "Safeguarding Our Intangible Heritage", wherein she urged the participants to start taking actions in protecting our cultural heritage. The second lecture, "Saving Our Natural Heritage: A Clarion Call for Action," was led by Dr. Ma. Victoria O. Espaldon of UP – Los Banos, who touched on the importance of being familiar with our own heritage trees and what can be done to protect our natural heritage.

Strengthening Faith through Performing Arts

In partnership with Clark Development Corporation Tourism Department, the DOT RIII stages the Sagrada Pampanga: A Kapampangan Sacred Art Exhibit and Healing Performance, a unique event developed by Kapampangan Artist and Cultural Advocate Peter de Vera to showcase Kapampangans' rich Lenten season traditions. Performances by Bale Balayan, TerDua Sessions, Pamanyulu and Pamanyugat, among other significant shows were rendered on April 4, 2023 (Holy Tuesday) at Clark Museum and 4D Theater Open Grounds to add to the diverse tourism attractions of the freeport.

“We want to revive the Lenten spirit, which used to be so strong among Kapampangans, through this event. After the pandemic, we’ve been on hiatus as far as our long-standing traditions are concerned, including our unique celebration of the Holy Week. Sagrada is just the start of the many Lenten activities that we want to establish to spur tourism gain here in our province,” explained RD Richard G. Daenos, PhD.

“It has been a productive and passion-forward year for DOT RIII and our stakeholders. These activities helped recognize the talents that Filipinos have and gave them a platform to voice out their knowledge. Whether you’re coming from the sports, creative, arts, or culinary industry, or if you’re an advocate of preserving our culture, we can all uplift and help each other for the better,” RD Daenos, PhD added.

Outstanding Tourism Stakeholders Shine During TRES Awards 2023

Recognizing the impactful contributions of enterprises and their stakeholders in the advancement of the tourism industry, the DOT RIII held the second Tourism Recognition for Enterprises and Stakeholders (TRES) Awards. Marking this as their second time to host the prestigious event, the DOT RIII contributed in enhancing the awards night by identifying relevant awards and special recognitions, refining criteria and requirements, and choosing the distinguished panel of tourism experts who conducted the interviews and chose the deserving winners.

“The TRES Awards is more than just an award-giving body. It is an opportunity for the DOT RIII to recognize the hard work and dedication of our industry partners. It has been a hard couple of years for the industry since the pandemic. But we are here, we are back, and it’s all thanks to our incredible partners who all deserved the spotlight tonight,” said RD Richard G. Daenos, Ph.D.

This edition of the TRES Awards recognized 36 winners across eight categories: the Mabuhay category, gender and development, tourism quality, tourism development, outstanding tourism program, Kaagapay, top tourist destination and special recognitions.

The TRES awards celebrate the efforts and creativity of stakeholders in positioning Central Luzon as a tourism destination that is worthy of the world’s attention. The TRES award also commends the region’s dedication in upholding and preserving their own cultures and practices.



In addition, these awards highlight the effort of stakeholders not only in elevating the tourism industry of Region III but also for integrating important messages that inspire a more inclusive and safer community where all people from different walks of life can thrive. The Gender and Development Category recognizes the most gender-sensitive tourist attractions, facilities, workplace for employees, and promotional materials that have been put out in the past year.

The most anticipated moment of the night was the awarding of the Top Tourist Destinations in the region. Under this category are three segments: municipality, city, and province and freeport, which were bagged by Dipaculao, Aurora; City of San Fernando, Pampanga; and Clark Freeport Zone, respectively. An award for Top Tourism Destination based on the nominee with the most number of same-day visitors was awarded to Subic Bay Freeport Zone.

During the event, LIPAD Corp. was given a special recognition for the inclusion of Clark International Airport in the Prix Versailles Laureate, World Architecture and Design Award. Additionally, FRD Ronaldo P. Tiotuico was also hailed with the DOT Central Luzon Haligi award in recognition of his outstanding contributions over the course of his career at the DOT RIII.



Clark to Host MICEcon 2024

After receiving the plaque of recognition as the next MICECon Destination from the DOT, Clark is officially set to host the 2024 edition of the Meeting, Incentives, Convention, and Exhibits Conference (MICECon). MICECon is the country's largest gathering for professionals in the MICE industry, bringing together hundreds of delegates both from the Philippines and other countries. The next MICEcon is slated in the month of July.



DOT RIII AND ITS STAKEHOLDERS Awards & Recognitions



SIGNIFICANT CITATIONS

ASEAN Tourism Standards Award

- Quest Plus Conference Clark, MICE VENUE (Meeting Room Category)
- Marriott Clark, MICE VENUE (Meeting Room Category)
- Quan Spa at Marriot Hotel, Spa Services Standard
- Apricus Therapeutic Clinic at Hilton Clark, Spa Services Standard
- Shell OGI at Northwalk2, CSFP, Public Toilet Standard

Accor Plus, 2023

- Swissôtel Clark
- Top Performing Hotel in Asia Pacific

30th World Travel Award for Best Lifestyle Hotel

- Swissôtel Clark, Winner

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority - Mabuhay Awards 2023

- Smile Concepts Implants and Cosmetic Dentistry Clinic
- Department of Labor and Employment, MSMEs of the Year
- Royal Duty Free Shops, Inc., Business of the Year - Leisure Industry
- Pacific Ace Subic Bay Cotp., Eco-Innovation
- Victory Gym and Athletic Club Inc., Health and Wellness of the Year
- Subic Duty Free Shop, Inc., Loyalty Business Award
- Brent International School Subic, Inc., Loyalty Business Award

F&V Global Food OPC (Maple 28 Restaurant)

- Q Asia's Seal of Product & Quality Service
- Best International Cuisine & Decadent Dessert
- Resto Cafe (Zamables) 2022-2023
- Elite Business Excellence Awards 2023
- Premiere Cafe Restaurant (Zambales Awards)
- Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority
- Mabuhay Awards 2023 - New Business of the Year

Zoobic Safari

Net25-TrailBlazers Awards

Innovation Award Theme Parks

Department of Labor and Employment

- Regional Winner Productivity Olympics 2023
- Most Productive Middle Scale Industry

Fortune Magazine and Great Place to Work

Hilton, No. 1 World's Best Workplace

Chinese Yachting Association and Shenzhen

Subic Sailing Club

World Match Racing Tour Champion

TripAdvisor

Le Charme Suites

Traveler's Choice 2023

Kayak Travel Awards 2023

Court Meridan Hotel

Best Hotel

World Cultural Dance Festival at Jeonju, South Korea

Sining Tanglawan of San Jose

del Monte, 5th Place

Tala Award

Department of Tourism - Region III

Advocate for Kapampangan Culture, Arts, and Heritage

36th Aliw Awards

Arti Sta. Rita, Best Cultural Group

5th Tokyo International Choir Competition

CLSU, Six Awards



Endless Stories



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