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## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY ECO AND AGRI-TOURISM INDUSTRY: BASIS FOR A STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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### ABSTRACT

*Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries and is a major source of income for many countries. Being a people-oriented industry, tourism also provides many jobs which have helped revitalise local economies (UNESCO, 2019).*

*However, like other forms of development, tourism can also cause its share of problems, such as social dislocation, loss of cultural heritage, economic dependence and ecological degradation. This paper is aimed at identifying the problems encountered by eco and agri-tourism operators in Pangasinan with the end in view of formulating a strategic development plan for the promotion of sustainable eco and agri-tourism industry in the province of Pangasinan. The researcher used the descriptive method of research. Using descriptive statistics, the researcher quantified the data gathered using the survey questionnaire. Data obtained from the questionnaire were triangulated using interview, on-site visit and observation.*

*The researcher concluded that lack of awareness and information about the value of eco and agri-tourism sites in the province remains the most common challenge that prevent the growth of eco and agri-tourism industry in the province.*

**KEYWORDS:** Sustainability, sustainable business, eco-tourism, agri-tourism, sustainable development

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned by Asadzadeh A, Mousavi MSS (2017), tourism is considered as the biggest and most renowned industry in the world. Many countries know this dynamic industry as the main source of income, employment, and private sector growth. Tourism has strong linkages with many other industries within national economies. The industry is also highly geographically dispersed. These aspects of Tourism can make expansion of the industry an effective tool for broader economic development, particularly for rural and low income regional economies. Tourism-

based businesses create jobs, bring new money into the region and also help diversify the local economic base. Economic diversity is critical to the success of most rural areas in both the developed and developing world. Tourism provides opportunities for residents to benefit from the cultural heritage of their local communities and develop goods and services, crafts, local foods, music dance, storytelling and guiding services which are sought by tourists. These activities provide additional livelihoods for households thereby helping to alleviate poverty. Tourism helps to promote

the cultural heritage of local communities (Christian, 2015).

Nowadays, tourism is completely dominated by the spirit of consumerism, which

states that “big is always better”. According to that statement, tourists are at a

constant pursuit of the biggest, cheapest and more impressive and unique experiences. It is impossible to develop such a product and at the same time support the natural environment in a region, its culture, lifestyle, its social and economic ecosystems, so that is the main reason why an alternative form of tourism had to be developed, in order to consider these important issues. One of these alternative forms of tourism that has been developed is sustainable tourism.

Sustainable tourism, as a term arose in the latest decades, as a result of the realization that tourism sector was in need to understand that sustainability practices were a direct obligation towards the community and its cultural values. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization sustainable tourism can be 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 the host communities.”

Sustainable tourism’s principles and practices can be implemented in every type of tourism, no matter if it is massive tourism of other niche tourism products.

Sustainable tourism takes into consideration the balance between the three pillars of sustainability, which are the economic pillar, the social pillar and last but not least the environmental pillar and the relationship among them.

Therefore, according to UNWTO, sustainable tourism has three core functions:

Making “optimal” use of natural resources, what are essentially and direct prerequisite of the development of tourism activity, managing vital environmental processes and support the heritage and the destination’s biodiversity.

Respecting the local community’s traditions and ethical values, its “sociocultural authenticity”

The prosperity of all stakeholders of the local community should be fairly distributed and the development of operations of sustainable tourism in a region should include “stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities and contributing to poverty alleviation”.

Sustainable tourism, due to the heterogeneity of the tourism product itself, requires constant and strict cooperation of the local stakeholders and needs their consistent participation. In order to deal with several emerging issues inside the host community, the

government should raise the awareness of its citizens about the central issue of sustainability and introduce several practices in order to improve the living standard of the host community and at the same time preserve its culture and ethical values. (Goniadis & Lampridi 2015)

In general, it is the policy of the Philippine to consider tourism as an indispensable element of the national economy and an industry of national interest and importance, which must be harnessed as an engine of socioeconomic growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment, foreign exchange and employment, and to continue to mold an enhanced sense of national pride for all Filipinos.

As further shown in Figure 3, there are two legal bases upon which this study is anchored. As shown in Figure 3, the study’s research paradigm, this study has its anchor on two legislations: Tourism Act of 2009 and “Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016,” AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF FARM TOURISM IN THE PHILIPPINES.

Accordingly, the State recognizes sustainable tourism development as integral to the national socioeconomic development efforts to improve the quality of life of the Filipino people, providing the appropriate attention and support for the growth of this industry, promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities and encourage private sector participation and agri - tourism for countryside development and preservation of rural life.

As a hybrid concept fusing together the elements of the tourism and agriculture industries, agri-tourism can be harnessed as a form of special interest tourism focusing on the unique travel experiences and activities that people can have in agricultural settings. When people travel, it is the attraction or experience that people go for; if food and beverage, accommodation and transportation are included in the package, even a farm can be a tourist destination.

This paper looked into the challenges or problems encountered by eco and agri-tourism industry in the province of Pangasinan as basis for the formulation of strategic development.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to determine the problems encountered by eco and agri-tourism site operators as basis for a strategic development plan. The researcher envisioned to answer the following questions:

1. What are the problems encountered by the operators of eco and agri-tourism industry in Pangasinan and how serious are they?
2. Based on the findings, what strategic development plan can be proposed to address the problems encountered?
- 3.

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is basically a descriptive research. Descriptive research is “aimed at casting light on current issues or problems through a process of data collection that enables them to describe the situation more completely than was possible without employing this method.”

In its essence, descriptive studies are used to describe various aspects of the phenomenon. In its

popular format, descriptive research is used to describe characteristics and/or behaviour of sample population.

An important characteristic of descriptive research relates to the fact that while descriptive research can employ a number of variables, only one variable is required to conduct a descriptive study. Three main purposes of descriptive studies can be explained as describing, explaining and validating research findings.

### 4.0. SAMPLING DESIGN

Using a purposive sampling, A total of 100 respondents from business/establishment operators of the eco-tourism and agri-tourism sites took part in this study. The following table presents the breakdown thereof:

| Eco and Agri-tourism Sites                                 | Number of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| The Hundred Islands National Park                          | 10                    |
| Manleluag Hot Spring                                       | 10                    |
| Balungao Agro-Eco Tourism                                  | 10                    |
| Tayug Eco-Park   | 10                    |
| Bugallon Eco-Tourism Park                                  | 10                    |
| Sta. Barbara Provincial Nursery and Agricultural Extension | 10                    |
| Our Farm Republic  | 10                    |
| Paraiso del Valour   | 10                    |
| Pure Green Eco-Farm  | 10                    |
| Roheim Farm and Wellness Resort                            | 10                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>100</b>            |

The researcher primarily made use of a questionnaire. The researcher likewise used semi-structured interview which focuses on the different sustainable tourism practices in the four cases identified. The data collected from the questionnaire and semi-structured interview were validated and triangulated using on-site visit and observation.

Data obtained were quantified using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentage and average weighted mean. Calculations

and analysis were made possible using the SPSS software.

### 5.0 RESULTS

#### 5.1. On Problems Encountered by by Eco and Agri-Tourism Sites in Pangasinan

This section of the study dicusses the problems encountered by eco and agri-tourism sites in Pangasinan. Data obtained were quantified using average weighted mean.

Table 1 presents the problems encountered by eco and agri-tourism sites in Pangasinan.

**Table 1**  
**Problems Encountered by Eco and Agri-Tourism Sites in Pangasinan**

| <b>Problems Encountered by Eco and Agri-tourism Sites in Pangasinan</b>   | <b>AWM</b> | <b>Descriptive Equivalent</b> |
|---|------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Dealing with guests and visitors can be a challenge more particularly when staffs are not adequately trained to deal with them.  | 2.67       | Moderately Serious            |
| 2. Marketing the business can be very tough as most people are not yet aware of the services offered by site.   | 2.73       | Moderately Serious            |
| 3. Costs arising from property taxes, insurance and liability expenses can be a burden.   | 2.12       | Slightly Serious              |
| 4. The limits of seasonality and the inclement weather could hamper the operations of the eco/agri-tourism site; hence, minimizing profitability within the year.   | 3.34       | Moderately Serious            |
| 5. Initial capital investment and maintaining profitability can be challenging as agri-tourism necessitates a considerable amount for its operations.   | 3.90       | Serious                       |
| 6. Safety and security of both visitors and operators can be an issue particularly to locations in countryside where insurgents may prey on unsuspecting travelers and visitors.                                  | 1.58       | Not Serious                   |
| 7. Poor rural infrastructure could dissuade visitors from visiting farms and eco-tourism sites.   | 4.16       | Serious                       |
| 8. Training new employees or family members to ensure continuity of efficient operations of the farm, enabling farm succession or site operations in the long-term.   | 2.34       | Slightly Serious              |
| 9. Costs and compliance to accreditation requirements can pose a challenge to a starting eco/agri-tourism establishment.  | 1.98       | Slightly Serious              |
| 10. Accessibility to knowledge and technology resource to keep up with latest trends and best practices in eco and agri-tourism industry entails time, efforts and added logistical expense to the establishment. | 2.55       | Moderately Serious            |
| 11. Lack of awareness about the value of eco and farm tourism hinders the industry's growth.  | 4.33       | Very Serious                  |
| 12. Lack of administrative and technical support from the local government units  | 2.89       | Moderately Serious            |

Table 1 shows that among the problems encountered by eco and agri-tourism sites, the lack of awareness about the value of eco and farm tourism which hinders the industry's growth is considered very serious as evidenced by the average weighted mean of 4.33.

The following problems are perceived as serious by the eco and agri-tourism site operators and employees: poor rural infrastructure that could dissuade visitors from visiting farms and eco-tourism sites, (4.16); and initial capital investment and maintaining profitability that can be challenging as agri-tourism necessitates a considerable amount for its operations, (3.90).

It appears that most of the respondents perceive most of the problems as moderately serious as shown by the following: the limits of seasonality and the inclement weather which could hamper the operations of the eco/agri-tourism site; hence, minimizing profitability within the year, (3.34); lack of administrative and technical support from the local government units, (2.89); marketing the business can be very tough as most people are not yet aware of the services offered by site, (2.73); dealing with guests and visitors can be a challenge more particularly when staffs are not adequately trained to deal with them (2.67); and accessibility to knowledge and technology resource to keep up with latest trends and best practices

in eco and agri-tourism industry entails time, efforts and added logistical expense to the establishment, (2.55);

Among other problems met by eco and agri-tourism industry perceived as slightly serious by the respondents include: training new employees or family members to ensure continuity of efficient operations of the farm, enabling farm succession or site operations in the long-term (2.34); costs arising from property taxes, insurance and liability expenses (2.12); and costs and compliance to accreditation requirements can pose a challenge to a starting eco/agri-tourism establishments, (1.98).

Finally, it appears that of all the problems encountered in the eco and agri-tourism industry in Pangasinan, the safety and security of both visitors and operators to locations in countryside where insurgents may prey on unsuspecting travelers and visitors may not be an issue at all as shown by the average weighted mean of 1.58.

Based on the foregoing data, it is apparent that of all the problems encountered by eco and agri-tourism operators and employees in Pangasinan, the information gap or lack of adequate awareness on the services of eco and agri-tourism sites pose the greatest threat by far. This rings true particularly on farm tourism or agri-tourism which can be considered as an infant industry in the country. The findings of this study seems to affirm the findings of De Villa, et al. (2018) where the lack of awareness on the products and services of farm tourism seems to hinder the development of the industry. The said government agency can partner with educational institutions and farm owners to intensify the campaign on farm tourism awareness.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that eco and agri-tourism operators and employees consider the safety and security of both visitors and operators as a non-issue at all. This could be attributed to the fact that the peace and order in the country particularly in rural areas in Pangasinan have significantly improved during the last decade. The Armed Forces of the Philippines recommended for a declaration of insurgency-free in Pangasinan in recognition of its peace, order and stability. Accordingly, the declaration is not only beneficial to the entire populace of Pangasinan in terms of having a sense of territorial ownership and socioeconomic growth but is also a welcome development on the part of local and foreign tourists who frequently visit the province (The Philippine Star, 2018).

## 5.2. Strategic Development Plan for the Promotion of Eco and Agri-Tourism in Pangasinan

On the basis of the findings and conclusions drawn from this study, the researcher arrived at a Strategic Development Plan.

The Strategic Development Plan proposed in this study have the following parts: Introduction, Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Development Concerns and Challenges, Principles of Good Governance, Goals, Strategies, and Programs and Projects.

The Introduction gives an overview what the strategic development plan contains. It provides the reader a brief gist of what to expect to read in the plan.

The vision statement expresses the roadmap for eco and agri-tourism to promote and sustain eco and agri-tourism in the province of Pangasinan indicating what the province intends to become and sets the direction of the transformational initiatives.

The mission statement explains the reason of entry of the existence of the eco and agri-tourism industry in the province of Pangasinan, what its overall goal is.

Development concerns and challenges refer to the various issues that beset eco and agri-tourism industry in the province.

The principles of good governance essentially refer to fundamental tenets and axiomatic fundamental truths that guide decision-making in the area of polity.

Goals, in general, are the overriding objective sought to be attained in the long-term by the province through the use of different Strategies, operational and tactical activities that will help achieve the goals. These strategies can be carried out through the implementation of programs and projects.

### *Strategic Development Plan (2018-2028) for the Promotion of*

### *Eco and Agri-tourism Industry in Pangasinan*

#### **Introduction**

With its vast expanse of white and sandy beaches, verdant hills, scenic terrains and immense expanse of agricultural bounties, Pangasinan is a stunning jewel in Northern Luzon. Ecotourism and agri-tourism are potential drivers of development in the province that can pole-vault it from its current stature to one which will catapult it to success along the three dimensions of sustainability, to wit: economic, environmental and socio-cultural.

This Strategic Development Plan lays down a general blueprint on how eco and agri-tourism can be promoted and sustained in the province through the universally accepted principles of good governance.

These principles served as a guide in charting the direction towards the accomplishment of its vision and mission in the next ten years. The Province of Pangasinan should leave no stone unturned in capturing the urgency of the moment and being able to grasp the momentum of development. Through the employment of well-crafted strategies in promoting and sustaining the eco and agri-tourism industry, the province is vent towards accomplishing its goal. The development paradigm in this plan prescribes an inclusive and sustainable eco and agri-tourism industry which the province should use as its compass. The vision is reflective of this paradigm with people, planet and prosperity at its core.

### **Vision Statement**

An inclusive, equitable and sustainable eco and agri-tourism industry in ASEAN region by 2028

### **Mission Statement**

To promote and develop eco and agri-tourism in the province of Pangasinan that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities

### **Development Concerns and Challenges**

The key development concerns and challenges that confront eco and agri-tourism industry in the province of Pangasinan are the offshoots of the environmental scanning from consultation with the stakeholders of the industry. As such these inputs serve as the springboard in developing the strategic development plan.

There are five priority concerns that stakeholders sought to address in the development plan, to wit:

1. low awareness level on eco and agri-tourism industry;
2. lack of adequate infrastructure facility for eco and agri-tourism sites to facilitate travel and mobility;
3. institutionalization of inclusive and sustainable eco and agri-tourism industry;
4. integration of environmental protection and social consideration; and
5. optimum stakeholder participation in eco and agri-tourism activities

The foregoing are the hard realities on the ground which needed to be addressed if inclusive and sustainable development along the area of tourism is to be achieved.

Creating a massive awareness campaign about eco and agri-tourism industry in the province, giving emphasis on the industry's impact along the three dimensions of sustainable development and as an indispensable element of the national economy and an industry of national interest and importance, which must be harnessed as an engine of socio-economic

growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment, foreign exchange and employment, and to continue to mold an enhanced sense of national pride for all Pangasinenses and the Filipino people. Promoting eco and agri-tourism industry of the province is integral to the national socio-economic development efforts to improve the quality of life of the Filipino people, providing the appropriate attention and support for the growth of this industry.

Another area of development challenge is the lack of adequate infrastructure facility for eco and agri-tourism sites in the province. Some of the eco and agri-tourism sites in the province are not still accessible by public transport. Building adequate roads and bridges will bring people to this area and promote development in the locality. Government-managed eco and agri-tourism sites should be equipped with the basic facilities required of the site to be accredited by the Department of Tourism and Agricultural Training Institute and other accrediting bodies that have stakes in eco and agri-tourism industry.

The development and promotion of eco and agri-tourism should be made integral part of the planning process and agenda not only of the province but also by each local government unit, the private sector and the local communities where these eco and agri-tourism sites are situated. The local government units should aim to develop a tourism action plan and work for its adoption and implementation, activities and programs which promote tourism awareness, preserve the country's diverse cultures and heritage, and instill a sense of history and a culture of tourism among the youth and the populace.

While eco and agri-tourism can be an effective driver of development and catalyst of progress, the need to strike balance between economic progress and socio-environmental considerations is a must. This calls for responsible tourism as a strategy for environmentally sound and community participatory tourism programs, enlisting the participation of local communities, including indigenous peoples, in conserving bio-physical and cultural diversity, promoting environmental understanding and education, providing assistance in the determination of ecotourism sites and ensuring full enjoyment of the benefits of tourism by the concerned communities.

Any effort to promote and develop eco and agri-tourism needs the active involvement of its stakeholders. It is difficult if not well-nigh impossible to craft strategies and plans without consultation with its stakeholders. One cannot stress enough the importance of strengthening the role of tourism councils and encouraging the participation of non-government organizations (NGOs), people's

organizations (POs) and the private sector in initiating programs for tourism development and environmental protection.

### Principles of Good Governance

In the pursuit of the vision and mission for the development and promotion of eco and agri-tourism industry in Pangasinan, the following shall serve as guiding principles:

- i. Inclusiveness;
- ii. Transparency;
- iii. Accountability;
- iv. Innovation;
- v. Legitimacy

Table 2 below presents the strategic development plan for the promotion and development of sustainable eco and agri-tourism industry in the province of Pangasinan in tabular form.

**Table 2 Strategic Development Plan for Sustainable Tourism in Pangasinan**

| Areas of Concern                                    | Objectives  | People Involved  | Time Frame                                  | Strategies/ Activities  | Budgetary Req't. | Expected Output                         |
|---|---|--|---|---|------------------|---|
| <b>Eco and Agri-Tourism Marketing and Promotion</b> | To create a critical mass of information so as to boost eco and agri-tourism in the province of Pangasinan resulting to increased tourist arrivals and increased tourism revenues | National and local officials from DOT, DTI, DA and LGUs;<br><br>Eco and agri-tourism site owners/operators;<br><br>Local community | 2022 – 50%<br><br>2025-70%<br><br>2028-100% | Advocacy campaigns and marketing project; massive marketing and multi-media promotion; Online Social Media Promotion<br><br>The DOT and the Tourism Promotions Board, the DA, the DTI and LGUs to include eco and farm tourism in their marketing and promotions programs, and support operators of accredited farm tourism camps and their associations in conducting and joining local and international conferences, congresses, trade fairs, and exhibits | Php 10M          | Increased tourist arrivals*             |
|   |   | National and local officials from DOT, DTI, DA and LGUs;<br><br>Eco and agri-tourism site owners/operators;<br><br>Local community | 2022 – 50%<br><br>2025-70%<br><br>2028-100% | Conduct of festivals that reflect the idiosyncrasies of the place;<br><br>Conduct of seminar, fora and symposia on farm tourism and ecotourism<br><br>Showcasing local products, heritage and traditions of the places where the eco and agri-tourism sites are situated.<br><br>Balik-Bukid Bisita<br><br>Ecotourism and Farm Tourism Congress<br>Place branding showcasing local products and services;<br>Innovative, Immersive and Localized Marketing    | Php 20M          | Increased eco and agri-tourism revenues |

|   |   |   |  |  |                 |   |
|---|---|---|--|--|-----------------|---|
| <p><b>Tourism Infrastructure Development</b></p>              | <p>To improve infrastructure facility for eco and agri-tourism sites</p>  | <p>National and local officials from DOT, DTI, DA and LGUs, DOTC and DPWH;<br/><br/>Private Investors<br/><br/>Eco and agri-tourism site owners/operators;<br/><br/>Local community</p> | <p>2022 - 50%<br/><br/>2025- 70%<br/><br/>2028- 100%</p> | <p>Enhance international business relations for the support of tourism projects of The private sector, through partnerships, joint ventures and other cooperative undertakings involving local and foreign investor<br/><br/>Creating an enabling environment for the private sector by improving connectivity and providing the basic infrastructure and services at the tourist destinations<br/><br/>Properly managing the destination through proper land use planning, issuance of business permits and zoning controls, and environmental and other regulations<br/><br/>Infrastructure Development Investment Program for Eco and Agri-tourism;<br/><br/>Public-private engagement in improving tourism-related infrastructures<br/><br/>Maintain international standards of excellence in all tourism facilities and Services, and promote the country as a safe and wholesome tourist destination</p> | <p>Php 100M</p> | <p>Additional bridges, roads, hotel accommodations, convention centers, entertainment facilities and other physical facilities that will improve mobility to the eco and agri-tourism sites</p> |
| <p><b>Institutional Framework of Eco and Agri-tourism</b></p> | <p>To institutionalize integrated tourism planning among local government units and unified farm tourism efforts among private farm tourism site owners</p> | <p>National and local officials from DOT, DTI, DA and LGUs, DOTC and DPWH;<br/><br/>Private Investors<br/><br/>Eco and agri-tourism site owners/operators;</p>                          | <p>2020- 100%</p>  | <p>Enhance capability-building of local government units (LGUs), in partnership with the private sector, in the management of local tourism projects and initiatives, thereby ensuring accessible and affordable destinations throughout the country, especially in areas which have shown strong comparative advantage<br/>Flexible Planning Project;<br/>Capacity Building Project;</p>  | <p>Php 1M</p>   | <p>All local government units with ecotourism sites with tourism master plan</p>  |

|  |   |  |   |   |          |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|----------|---|
|  |   | Local community  |   | Public participation and institutional ownership of tourism master plan; Community Participation and Stakeholder Participation Program  |          |   |
|  |   | National and local officials from DOT, DTI, DA and LGUs, DOTC and DPWH;<br><br>Private sector<br><br>Eco and agri-tourism site owners/ operators;<br><br>Local community | 2020-100%   | Formulation and promulgation, in consultation with the LGUs, the private sector industries and other tourism stakeholders, rules and regulations governing the operation and activities of all tourism enterprises, including but not limited to a national standard for licensing, accreditation and classification of tourism enterprises, prescribing therein minimum levels of operating quality and efficiency for their operation in accordance with recognized international standards, impose reasonable penalties for violation of accreditation policies; Coordination of public (representatives from DOT, ATI, DA, etc.) and private entities (farm tourism operators) in the development of farm tourism action plan; Capacity Building Project; and Community Participation and Stakeholder Participation Program | Php 200K | All farm tourism site owners and operators with farm tourism action plans |
| <b>Sustainable and Inclusive Sustainable Tourism</b> | To promote sustainable and inclusive ecotourism and farm tourism activities | National and local officials from PSA, DOT, DTI, DA and LGUs;<br><br>Eco and agri-tourism site owners/ operators;<br><br>Local community                                 | 2020-30% unemployment reduction among locals; 2025-50% reduction of unemployment among local; 2028-100% | Establish a databank of tourism areas and projects for investment purposes, and encourage private sector investment and participation in tourism activities and projects;<br><br>Promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities;<br>Job-for-Locals Program;   | Ph 2M    | Increased job opportunities for the local populace                        |

|                           |   |   |   |   |          |   |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|----------|---|
|                           |   |   | reduction of unemployment among local populace                                    |   |          |   |
|                           | To promote environmental stewardness alongside eco and agri-tourism promotion   | National and local officials from PSA, DOT, DTI, DA and LGUs;<br><br>Eco and agri-tourism site owners/operators;<br><br>Local community                                 | 2025-40% restoration of biodiversity;<br><br>2028-60% restoration of biodiversity | Enlisting the participation of local communities, including indigenous peoples, in conserving bio-physical and cultural diversity, promoting environmental understanding and education, providing assistance in the determination of ecotourism sites and ensuring full enjoyment of the benefits of tourism by the concerned communities;<br><br>Ensure the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology through the promotion of activities geared towards environmental protection, conservation and restoration;<br><br>Environmentally sound and community participatory tourism programs | Php50K   | Biodiversity and natural resource conservation  |
| <b>Tourism Governance</b> | To promote multi-stakeholder, intergovernmental and polycentric governance of eco and agri-tourism industry in Pangasinan | National and local officials from DOT, DTI, DA and LGUs, DOTC and DPWH;<br><br>Private sector<br><br>Eco and agri-tourism site owners/operators;<br><br>Local community | 2025-100% accredited ecotourism and farm tourism sites                            | The ATI and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) to showcase farm tourism camps and activities as a way of promoting sustainable agriculture. The ATI to encourage farm tourism camps to become learning sites and accredited extension service providers, and the TESDA to accredit farm tourism camps as technical vocational institutions for agriculture and tourism courses.<br><br>The DTI Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise  | Php 200K | Increased number of accredited ecotourism and agri-tourism sites by the Department of Tourism and Agricultural Training Institute |

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|  |  |  |  | <p>Development and the Bureau of Domestic Trade Promotion and the DA – Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service will assist farm tourism operators and practitioners in the marketing and distribution of their products, and link them with consumers cooperatives and organizations, and retailers.</p> <p>The DOT, the DA, and the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) to launch and pursue a nationwide campaign to promote farm tourism and accredited farm tourism camps, and promote the principle of sustainable development. Capability building for LGUs in the promotion, development and sustainability of farm tourism camps and activities;</p> <p>Establish cooperation among, and/or request the assistance of, departments, bureaus, offices, agencies or instrumentalities of the government, farm tourism stakeholders, financial and educational institutions, nongovernment organizations, people’s organizations and other like-minded institutions and individuals;</p> <p>Accreditation and Certification Program</p> |  |  |
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**6.0. CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the analysis and findings of this paper, the following conclusions were drawn:

Firstly, Problems encountered perceived as *serious* by the eco and agri-tourism site operators and employees include poor rural infrastructure that could dissuade visitors from visiting farms and eco-tourism sites, (4.16); and initial capital investment and

maintaining profitability that can be challenging as agri-tourism necessitates a considerable amount for its operations, (3.90); whereas, the safety and security of both visitors and operators to locations in countryside where insurgents may prey on unsuspecting travelers and visitors may not be an issue at all as shown by the average weighted mean of 1.58.

Finally, a strategic development plan for the development and promotion of eco and agri-tourism can be utilized to further improve the performance of tourism in the province.

## 7.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is primordial that policy-makers and decision-makers in the industry devise action plans and strategies to address the problems encountered by eco and agri-tourism sites in Pangasinan. It is also equally important that the government incentivize the operations of eco and agri-tourism sites not only in the province of Pangasinan but across the entire country. Finally, since this study is confined within the geographical scope of Pangasinan, related study in the future relating to other provinces of regions can be of great help in improving existing knowledge in the area and improve benchmark data, adequate enough to map out problem areas, and arrive at a more insightful evidenced-based tourism planning.

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