



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 6152

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BY REPRESENTATIVES ABAD, RELAMPAGOS, ALVAREZ (F.), CAGAS, LANETE,  
ABUEG, DIMAPORO (I.), FORTUN, PICHAY AND REYES, PER COMMITTEE  
REPORT NO. 889

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AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF BATANES AS A  
RESPONSIBLE, COMMUNITY-BASED CULTURAL HERITAGE  
AND ECOTOURISM ZONE

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in  
Congress assembled:*

1           SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Batanes  
2 Responsible Tourism Act”.

3           SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes, respects, and  
4 protects the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop  
5 their cultures, traditions, and institutions, and considers these rights in the  
6 formulation of national plans and policies.

7           The State is further mandated to promote a tourism industry that is  
8 ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive,  
9 economically viable and equitable for local communities. Towards this end,  
10 the Province of Batanes is hereby declared a cultural heritage and ecotourism  
11 zone. It shall be accorded priority development by the Department of Tourism

1 (DOT) and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the  
2 development of cultural heritage and ecotourism zones. The promotion of the  
3 following inherent values and characteristics which influence the uniqueness  
4 of the Ivatan culture and the beauty of the islands of Batanes shall be pursued  
5 in the development and management of the tourism industry in the Province:  
6 (a) the integrity of its ecology and environment; (b) the richness of its natural  
7 and cultural heritage; and (c) the resilience of its indigenous social institutions.

8 SEC. 3. *Objectives.* – Pursuant to the above declaration of policy, the  
9 State shall endeavor to accomplish the following objectives:

10 (a) Develop and promote responsible, community-based ecological-  
11 cultural tourism as the core management strategy in the development and  
12 growth of Batanes;

13 (b) Ensure the conservation of the biodiversity and the preservation of  
14 the unique heritage and culture of the Province;

15 (c) Develop tourism products and programs that will generate  
16 employment and livelihood for the local residents consistent with the  
17 preservation and maintenance of local heritage and culture;

18 (d) Guarantee that the financial and economic benefits of the tourism  
19 industry are equitably shared by, and distributed among, the Ivatans and local  
20 residents by giving preference and support to community- and home-based  
21 tourism enterprises, such as micro and small businesses like local inns, lodges  
22 and homestays, restaurants, food and fruit stands, arts and craft shops, and  
23 similar tourism-oriented industries and businesses;

24 (e) Ensure that the quality of local tourism programs and activities are  
25 educational and enriching for tourists and visitors through the provision of  
26 orientation, educational and tour programs by local tour operators,  
27 nongovernment organizations (NGOs), local government units (LGUs) and the  
28 DOT; and

1           (f) Guarantee that in the development and promotion of the local  
2 tourism industry, the LGUs shall ensure that the needs of local residents and  
3 communities in the areas of water supply, food, energy and local construction  
4 materials are first secured and met.

5           SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

6           (a) *Biodiversity conservation* refers to the practice of preserving the  
7 variety of species, habitats and ecosystems, and genetic diversity of the place,  
8 including *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the  
9 ecological complexes which they are a part of;

10          (b) *Community-based tourism* refers to a form of tourism where the  
11 local community and its residents have substantial control over and  
12 involvement in the development and management of the local tourism industry  
13 and a greater proportion of the economic gains remain within the community;

14          (c) *Cultural property* refers to all products of human creativity by  
15 which a people and a nation reveal their identity, including churches, mosques  
16 and other religious worship, schools and natural history specimens and sites,  
17 whether public or privately owned, movable or immovable, and tangible or  
18 intangible;

19          (d) *Ecotourism* refers to a form of sustainable tourism within a natural  
20 and cultural heritage area where community participation, protection, and  
21 management of natural resources, cultural and indigenous knowledge and  
22 practices, environmental education and ethics, as well as economic benefits  
23 are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host communities and  
24 satisfaction of visitors;

25          (e) *Homestay* refers to a system of tourist accommodation where a  
26 tourist stays with local residents and experience the day-to-day life of Ivatans  
27 and their communities;

1 (f) *Indigenous social institutions* refer to the institutions that embody  
 2 the unique community orientation and cooperation pervasive in the way of life  
 3 of the Ivatans. This includes the indigenous cooperative institutions in house  
 4 construction, boat building and fishing, agricultural cultivation, wake and  
 5 burial practices, and public infrastructure construction;

6 (g) *Ivatan natural and cultural heritage* refers to the landscapes,  
 7 seascapes, historic places, sites and built environments of the Province  
 8 precisely delineated because of their outstanding value from the point of view  
 9 of science, conservation, natural beauty, as well as biodiversity; and includes  
 10 past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences of the  
 11 Ivatans that are important foundations for the development of present and  
 12 future generations;

13 (h) *Landscapes* refer to historic, cultural, symbolic vistas and sight  
 14 corridors of cultural sites, inclusive of fixed or immovable structures and  
 15 configuration of structures with established relationship with each other;

16 (i) *Responsible ecotourism* refers to a form of sustainable tourism in  
 17 which both the tourism sector and the tourists take responsibility in the  
 18 protection, respect, and conservation of the natural environment and the local  
 19 culture and ways of life, and where community participation as well as  
 20 economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the well-being of the local  
 21 people and satisfaction of visitors; and

22 (j) *Sustainable tourism development* refers to the management of all  
 23 resources in a way that simultaneously meets the needs of tourists and host  
 24 regions; protects the opportunities for the future; fulfills the economic, social,  
 25 and aesthetic needs; and preserves cultural integrity, essential ecological  
 26 processes, biological diversity and a system that supports and perpetuates life.

3 known as the "Batanes Protected Area Act of 2000".

4 SEC. 6. *Provincial Tourism Development Plan.* – The DOT, in  
 5 coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
 6 (DENR), the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), and the  
 7 National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), shall assist the  
 8 Province of Batanes in the formulation of the Provincial Tourism  
 9 Development Plan that shall be complemented by a set of guidelines and  
 10 standards for a responsible, community-based ecotourism. The tourism  
 11 development plan shall ensure the preservation of the natural sites, the cultural  
 12 and historic significance of identified tourist attractions, and respect for Ivatan  
 13 culture and traditions, and shall include the following components:

- 14 (a) Carrying capacity of sites;
- 15 (b) Specific site assessments;
- 16 (c) Identification of strategic priorities;
- 17 (d) Product development for local income generation;
- 18 (e) Capacity-building for local communities so residents therein can  
 19 ably manage economically viable and responsible, community-based  
 20 ecotourism business enterprises;

21 (f) Support for the formation of local production groups and networks,  
 22 including the marketing and pricing of products; and

23 (g) Marketing strategies that reflect the natural, cultural, social and  
 24 environmental integrity of Batanes.

25 The process of developing the Tourism Master Plan shall be  
 26 participatory, from the bottom up, with the framework provided by the DOT,  
 27 the DENR, the NCIP, and the NCCA, in consultation with the provincial and  
 28 municipal governments.

1           SEC. 5. *Scope and Coverage.* – This Act shall cover the same  
2 boundaries as provided in Section 3 of Republic Act No. 8991, otherwise  
3 known as the “Batanes Protected Area Act of 2000”.

4           SEC. 6. *Provincial Tourism Development Plan.* – The DOT, in  
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6 (DENR), the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), and the  
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26 participatory, from the bottom up, with the framework provided by the DOT,  
27 the DENR, the NCIP, and the NCCA, in consultation with the provincial and  
28 municipal governments.

1           SEC. 7. *Formulation of Guidelines and Standards.* – The concerned  
2 Protected Area Management Board of the DENR, the NCIP, and the local  
3 tourism council, in coordination with the LGUs, shall assist in the formulation  
4 of local tourism standards in the context of environmental stability, as well as  
5 recommend guidelines to ensure that biodiversity conservation and  
6 environmental protection are integrated in the development of heritage and  
7 ecotourism plans. The guidelines and standards shall:

8           (a) Raise the capacity of all stakeholders and ensure that best practices  
9 are followed;

10           (b) Ensure optimal use of water and energy;

11           (c) Reduce waste and pollution through the encouragement of  
12 recycling and environmentally-sound waste management disposal schemes,  
13 with a principle of taking as much waste away from the site as possible; and

14           (d) Encourage the use of local produce and services, and support the  
15 employment of local people.

16           SEC. 8. *Coordination with National Agencies.* – The DOT shall  
17 closely coordinate with the provincial and municipal governments of the  
18 Province of Batanes, as well as with the regional and provincial offices of all  
19 relevant national government agencies, such as the DENR, the NCIP, the  
20 NCCA, the National Historical Commission, the National Museum, the  
21 Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Public  
22 Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of Transportation and  
23 Communications (DOTC), the Department of Agriculture (DA), the  
24 Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Department of Education  
25 (DepED), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of the  
26 Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Philippine National Police (PNP),  
27 the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), and the Philippine Ports  
28 Authority (PPA) in the implementation of this Act.

1           SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DOT, the DENR,  
2 the NCIP, and the NCCA, in consultation with the provincial and municipal  
3 governments of Batanes, concerned government agencies, and stakeholders,  
4 shall, *within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act*, promulgate the  
5 necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

6           SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* – In the event that any provision of this  
7 Act or part hereof is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions  
8 not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

9           SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders,  
10 presidential issuances and other administrative rules and regulations or parts  
11 thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or  
12 modified accordingly.

13           SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after  
14 its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,

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