

# Potentiality of Ecotourism Sites in the Province of Aklan: Basis for a Proposed Development Plan

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**Thea M. Balan**

Aklan State University, Philippines  
theabalan09@yahoo.com

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*Abstract - This study was conducted to assess the potentiality of ecotourism in Aklan. It presented the current status of the potential eco-tourism sites in Aklan in terms of festivities and events, spots and attraction, accommodation, food, the level of preparedness LGU's, infrastructure and marketing and tested the significant difference on responses when grouped according to profile variables finally, able to propose an ecotourism development plan. The researcher used descriptive method to present the findings. The participants were the councilors and tourism officers of the top 10 municipalities of Aklan according to population and the high ranking officials of the Provincial Tourism office. This instrument was subjected to content validation by experts in the field of ecotourism business and professors of business management. After considering the comments of the experts, the instrument was subjected for reliability procedure. The study concluded that most of the respondents are aged 51 to 60 years old, male, college graduate and councilors. Based on the results, festivities and events, food, spots and attraction and accommodation contributed positively to the potentiality of the ecotourism sites in Aklan. The community is needed to participate to any organized event and projects. Further, the researcher recommends that there may be private and local government collaboration; while, the DOT Aklan may direct the private entities to pursue environmental projects and eco programs promoting the ecotourism of the province and the Local Government units of Aklan and the private sectors may utilize the proposed eco-tourism development plan of the researcher to improve identified sites.*

**Keywords:** *Aklan, Development Plan and Ecotourism Sites*

## INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is recognized by the government as an important contributor to the generation of foreign exchange earnings, investments, revenue, and employment to the growth of the country's output. It deserves to be a top priority for national development because of the following reasons: it is a powerful and efficient industry; its impact on social development is broad and deep; it creates strong peripheral benefits; the Philippines can compete and win across the globe; and it helps maintains cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.

Tourism has grown into one of the world's major industries and has thus become an increasingly important. As stated under the Republic Act of 2009, also known as the Republic Act No. 9593 the national policy for tourism which encourages the business enthusiasts to invest and employ people while developing tourism spots that includes ecotourism of the country.

Ecotourism is an option to become a tourist destination. It carries out in various forms like nature-

based attractions, preservation of culture and heritage artifacts, preservation of ecology, imposed responsible tourists and community involvement protecting their own environment. Maintaining the ecotourism sites would mean life change in economic status, social development and environmental awareness of the local communities [1]. Thus, ecotourism encompasses large stream relevant to social and environmental development. In the global trend, ecotourism geared towards social living development, environmental sustainability and extended to responsible travellers who definitely appreciate the nature, culture and history [2].

Aside from Boracay, Aklan there are also many beautiful and interesting attractions to visit in the province. It has the Bakhawan Ecopark and Research Center. Bakhawan means "mangrove" in the local language. This is the prime ecotourism destination in the place. River trekking along with natural white rocks formation in the Timbaban River, experience the romantic seascape of Hinugtan Beach, while in Jawili Falls & Beach, Tangalan go down and refresh to the 7-basin waterfalls. Further, visiting the Montag Living

Museum is a unique experience to have an actual activity through immersion with the locals. These are only few close encounters with the splendid moments while staying in Aklan.

Ecotourism helps protect the natural habitats and pristine environments. The researcher believed showcasing the potential ecotourism in Aklan can be of help the poorer communities living therein to have a job or business to settle with without harming, altering or destroying the natural resources, natural habitats of wildlife but instead protecting and preserving its beautiful natural landscapes. By doing so the potential ecotourism in Aklan may also contribute to province down to its communities to build their economies without harming the environment. The researcher is confident that through this study the potential ecotourism in Aklan will turn to be as a tourist destination just like the majestic Boracay Island of Aklan.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to assess the potentiality of ecotourism in Aklan. Specifically, to 1) Present the demographic profile of respondents in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, and occupation. Identify the most visited potential eco tourism sites; 2) present the status of eco-tourism related sites in Aklan in terms of festivities and events, spots and attraction, accommodation and food; 3) determine the level of preparedness of Aklan in terms of: government support, infrastructure and marketing; 4) describe the aspects of potential eco-tourism in terms of: economic, health and environmental aspect and preservation and conservation; 5) test the significant difference on responses when grouped according to profile variables; and 6) propose an eco-tourism development plan.

### **METHODS**

#### **Research Design**

The descriptive method of research is used in the study, specifically the simple survey technique. This survey technique is an organized attempt to analyze, interpret and report the status of a group or area in order to secure evidence concerning the existing situation with the purpose of obtaining complete and accurate information [3].

#### **Participants of the Study**

The participants of the study were the councilors and tourism officers of the top 10 municipalities of Aklan according to population and the high-ranking officials of the Provincial Tourism office.

There are seventeen (17) Municipalities in the province of Aklan. Hence, in identifying the number of participants was based on the top 10 municipalities of Aklan according to the total number of its population. The researcher got the one hundred (100) percent of the total number of councilors of the top 10 municipalities and one (1) tourism officer for each top 10 Municipalities and high-ranking officials of the Provincial Tourism office; with a total of 100 participants.

#### **Instrument**

The researcher used data gathering tools with the end of getting all the data needed for this study. The questionnaire was composed of four (4) parts- firsts, the demographic profile of the participants; second, items on the Status of ecotourism sites in Aklan in terms of festivities and events, spots and attractions, accommodation and food; third, items on the level of preparedness of Aklan in terms of government support, infrastructure and marketing; and the last, items on the attitudes of the respondents towards economic, health and environmental aspects.

This instrument was subjected to content validation by experts in the field of ecotourism business and professors of business management. After considering the comments and suggestions of the experts, the improved instrument was subjected for reliability procedure. The questionnaire was administered to 30 respondents as samples who were not the actual respondents of the study but with similar characteristics from that of the actual respondents. The data was taken outside the top 10 municipalities of Aklan. After a period of one week (7 days), the questionnaire was retrieved and was subjected to reliability procedures using Cronbach alpha .819 thus, prove that this is valid to use.

The survey questionnaire will answer the Potentiality of Eco-Tourism Sites in the province of Aklan. The findings will be used to propose an ecotourism development plan. The questionnaire will be answered using the following scale: 5 – Excellent; 4 – Very Good; 3 – Good; 2 – Fair and 1 – Poor.

#### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researcher seek permission from the Department of Tourism and to the top 10 municipalities of Aklan based on population to administer and conduct the questionnaire to councilors and tourism officers. The developed items were subjected to content validation by experts in the field of eco-tourism

business and professors of business management. After establishing the validity, the instrument was subjected to reliability procedures using Cronbach alpha. Then, the final copy was administered to actual respondents of the study.

Not 100 percent questionnaires were retrieved because some of the respondents were not available during the distribution they were on leave or some were attending seminars. The data collected was treated with appropriate statistical tool.

The proposed Ecotourism Development Plan suggested by the researcher was checked and validated by one of the DOT Officer of the province, Ms. Gelly Maypa.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected was treated and analyzed using the following statistical tools. Weighted mean was computed to determine the status of eco-tourism related sites in Aklan in terms of festivities, attractions and accommodation, preparedness of Aklan in terms of government support, infrastructure and marketing, and attitudes of the people. While the T-test was used to determine the significance difference on the level of preparedness of Aklan when grouped according to municipality, and attitudes towards eco-tourism among the three groups of respondents, namely: councilors, tourism officers and provincial tourism officers of the top 10 municipalities according to population.

**Ethical Consideration**

A questionnaire with letter seeking permission to respondents was provided by the researcher. Consent was sought from the councilors, tourism officers and high-ranking provincial tourism officers. Anonymity remains throughout the study. The researcher assured the participants on the confidentiality of the data.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 presents the percentage distribution of the respondents’ profile in terms of age; many are belonging to 51 to 60 years old with a frequency of 24 or 30 percent; followed by 20 or 25 percent of the number of participants for each age bracket between 31 to 40 years old and 41 to 50 years old.

Based on the observation of the researcher many of the respondents are on the late adult stage since these are generally officials of the local government units. It took them years of work experience before they reach their position in the offices.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents’ Profile

Age	F	P(%)
21 yrs. Old- 30 yrs. Old	9	11.30
31 yrs. Old -40 yrs. Old	20	25.00
41 yrs. Old- 50 yrs. Old	20	25.00
51 yrs. Old – 60 yrs. Old	24	30.00
61 yrs. Old and above	7	8.70
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	52	65.00
Female	28	35.00
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
College Undergraduate	11	13.80
College Graduate	64	80.00
Postgraduate	5	6.20
<b>Occupation</b>		
Councilor	67	83.80
Tourism Officer	10	12.40
Provincial DOT Officer	3	3.80

While the two least number of participants belongs to ages 21 to 30 years old with 9 or 11.30 percent and 61 years old and above got 7 or 8.70 percent. Technically, as mentioned in the Senate Bill No. 738 compulsory retirement age of the government employees are from 65 to 60 years in this case, the 7 officers / participants are at the latter part of their age and work service.

In sex, majority of the participants were male with 52 or 65 percent whereas, female had 28 or 35 percent. In this study it shows that male actively participated in the communities of Aklan which it reflects that men dominated the government offices as councilors, tourism officers or DOT officials as compared to female.

For participants’ educational attainment most of the were college graduate with 64 or 80 percent; next is college undergraduate with 11 or 13.8 percent; last, are belong to postgraduate with 5 or 6.20 percent. Clearly revealed that majority of the participants were college degree holder which is parallel to the educational requirement as to be tourism officers and DOT officers while others are assumed that they have undertaken their post graduate degree. Whereas, for councilors has lower educational qualifications of at least high school.

Furthermore, in terms of occupation the participants with the highest frequency of 67 or 83.80 percent were councilors; followed by tourism officers with 10 or 12.4 percent and the least worked as a provincial DOT officer in Aklan, they were 3 or 3.8 percent. In municipal office there were at least 8-10 councilors depending on the wide range of municipal jurisdiction.

While, in the Department of Tourism it is very usually to have only 1 tourism officer assigned for each municipality and also, there is a minimum number of tourism officers in the office of DOT.

Table 2. Visited Potential Eco-tourisms Sites

	F	P (%)
Bakhawan Eco Park, Kalibo	59	73.80
Motag Living Museum, Malay	21	26.30
Liktinon White Rocks, Madalag	27	33.80
Katunggan it Ibajay, Ibajay	67	83.80
Jawili Falls & Beach, Tangalan	33	41.30
Hinugtan White Beach, Buruanga	37	46.30
Nabaoy River, Malay	21	26.30
Pawa Wind Farm, Nabas	15	18.80
Hacienda Maria, Buruanga	14	17.50

Table 2 presents the visited potential eco-tourism sites in Aklan. The most visited is Katunggan it Ibajay, Ibajay with 67 or 83.8 percent on the total number of the participants; followed by Bakhawan Eco Park, Kalibo with 59 or 73.8 participants and the third is Hinugtan White Beach, Buruanga with 37 or 46.3 percent.

The geographic location of Katunggan it Ibajay, Ibajay is an important factor to consider, since it is very near in the town proper it is easy to access. There are times that this mangrove ecopark have always been part of the secondary itineraries of the tours.

The experiences in developing the Kalibo mangroves eventually became the models for mangrove reforestation projects in the west central region of the country. The initiative also became a showcase for prestigious visitors, including groups from the Asian Development Bank, the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund, various review missions, the United States of America Peace Corps and universities [4].

While the three least potential eco-tourism sites visited by the respondents were Nabaoy River, Malay and Motag Living Museum, Malay with 21 or 26.3 percent; Pawa Wind Farm, Nabas had 15 or 18.8 percent and finally, the Hacienda Maria, Buruanga got the lowest frequency of 14 or 17.5 percent. Going to Hacienda Maria, Buruanga is always been a part of the island hopping from Boracay Island. The famous activity that the tourists could enjoy is the Kawa hot bath Jacuzzi also the cave adventure and swimming in the falls. However, despite of many tourist activities in the place not all tourists can avail the package of going to this spot because it is costly on their end.

Hacienda Maria is tucked away in the mountains of Buruanga in Aklan. It covers 14 hectares of land

blessed with waterfalls, caves, and lush vegetation. The guide will take a short trek to the mountains to reach the waterfalls. They can enjoy the views along the way, as to pass by traditional bamboo huts and rows of orchards. Once in the falls, enjoy its waters cascading into a bright blue natural pool. The tourists or guests will have time to take a dip in the pool and let the cool water relax.

From the waterfalls, the guide will take to two unspoiled caves, each with varying levels of difficulty. One cave is easy and suitable even for kids and older adults. It has interesting stalactites and stalagmites and other rock formations. The other cave is a bit more challenging and is best suited for those who want a more adventurous experience. Hacienda Maria also has a Hot Pot Jacuzzi—a pot resembling a giant wok large enough to hold a person. It is filled with water and put over a small fire. The tourists can soak in the pot to soothe tired muscles after the trek [5].

Table 3 reveals the status of potential eco-tourism sites in Aklan as to festivities and events obtained a composite mean of 4.48 as verbally interpreted as very good. This implies that festivities and events can be of help to attract tourists to visit the tourism sites.

Table 3 Status of Potential Eco-Tourism Sites In Aklan as to Festivities and Events

Indicators	WM	VI	R
1. Popularity of the feast or event	4.63	E	2
2. Extent of participation of the local community	4.46	VG	5
3. Extent of participation of tourists.	4.83	E	1
4. The uniqueness and creativity of the feast	4.52	E	4
5. Environmental advocacy was included during the feast or events.	4.18	VG	8
6. Variety of foods served during festival	4.33	VG	6.5
7. Variety of attractions during celebration of the feast or events.	4.33	VG	6.5
8. Safety and security of feast and events	4.58	E	3
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	

Some activities include the Search for Mutya ag Lakan it Kalibo Ati-atihan, Aklan Festivals Parade, Higitante Contest. Many tourists are looking forward to during the week-long celebration. The festivals allowed the crowd the principal streets of Kalibo to dance nonstop for several days rejoicing zealously to their religious vows.

Through festivities and events may extent the participation of the tourist in visiting the potential eco-tourism sites in Aklan which garnered a (4.83) weighted mean. Seconded by the popularity of the feast

or event with (4.63) while the safety and security of the feast and events is the third most high rated by the respondents with (4.58). The three mentioned indicators were all noted as excellent.

Since the participants are locals, they could easily relate themselves to the famous Ati-atihan festivals and the Piña and Fiber Festivals. Based on their assessment these festivals are well participated by many tourists. Tourists joined in the street dancing. More so, scheduled their tour in Aklan on the time where there is a festival to celebrate especially the foreign nationals who loved to immerse themselves in the local culture of the foreign land.

The celebrated festivities and organized events are part of the endeavor of the community and local government in order to attract tourists to visit some potential sites in the province of Aklan. More so, these events served as an option for many tourists to travel not only in Boracay but also in some other places of the province to experience the unique features and beautiful views and sceneries of the potential eco-tourism sites.

Festivals are an expressive way to celebrate glorious heritage, culture and traditions. They are meant to rejoice special moments and emotions in our lives with our loved ones. They play an important role to add structure to our social lives and connect us with our families and backgrounds [6].

On the other hand, the least were the extent of participation of the local community to the festivities and events got (4.46); while the variety of foods served and attraction during festival or events were tied to (4.33); and the last with (4.18) weighted mean is the environment advocacy included during the feast or event. However, the least three were marked positively as very good by the respondents.

Part of the past experience happened in Boracay Island that it was closed for tourist consumption in order to rehabilitate the exploited resources and other affected areas. The locals are now aware to take care their environment by managing the undesirable waste. Cleaning the venue after the events is strictly implemented and sometimes, they let the participants to participate in their waste management advocacy. It becomes a practice and always part of the environmental advocacy.

The awareness level among people about ecological pollution during festivities and Explored Social work intervention bring awareness about celebrating festivities without harming ecology [7].

Table 4. Status of Potential Eco-Tourism Sites In Aklan as to Spots and Attraction

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Famous white sand and beaches	4.71	E	1
2. Abundance of biodiversity (plants, animals and aquatic species)	4.16	VG	5
3. Presence of natural attraction (rock formation, caves, water falls, cold spring etc.)	4.33	VG	3
4. Number of pilgrims during Pilgrimage	4.11	VG	6
5. Historical sites (Churches, Monument, Landmark)	4.25	VG	4
6. Attractiveness of Mangrove Eco Park	4.46	VG	2
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	

Table 4 shows the status of the potential eco-tourism sites in Aklan as to spots and attraction had a composite mean of 4.34 with equivalent verbal interpretation as very good. Each municipality in the province offers different attractions, festivals and even delicacies and products unique among others. Attractions and events are extremely important of bringing the tourist in the destination from different places [8].

The highest indicator is the famous white sand and beaches in Aklan with the weighted mean of (4.71) noted excellent by the respondents. Whereas the attractiveness of mangrove eco-park (4.46); and, with the presence of natural attraction (rock formation, caves, water falls, cold spring etc.) (4.33); as the second and third were verbally interpreted as very good.

Boracay is famous because of the quality of it white sand beach. But white sand beach is not only to be found in Boracay Island, in Buruanga there is also a White Beach in Hinugtan, Buruanga. The beach is smaller and shorter white sand beach front compared to Boracay. But they have the same quality of natural powdered white sand.

The image of the tourist destinations is important, since it influences not only the choice of the destination by tourists but also their level of satisfaction. Often, destinations compete with each other through a little bit more than the image that they can create in the minds of potential travelers – the imagery. Therefore, tourist destination marketers invest a great number of resources to create a favorable and desirable image, which conquers potential travelers to visit or re-visit their destination [9].

Among the least were Historical sites (Churches, Monument, Landmark) (4.25), abundance of biodiversity (plants, animals and aquatic species) (4.16) and number of pilgrims during Pilgrimage (4.11) in the potential eco-tourism sites in Aklan were perceived as very good.

In Aklan, there are also old churches to find, however very few are into pilgrimage activities. But during the Ati-atihan Festivals, religious organization are busy organizing pilgrimage activities where locals and tourists joined together to celebrate and participate in the intended religious programs or schedules.

For those in the tourism industry, festivals also carry a positive impact in three parallel areas: attracting tourism, improving the place's image and supporting the local community. First and foremost, festivals are a great anchor for attracting tourism [10].

Table 5. Status of Potential Eco-Tourism Sites in Aklan as to Accommodation

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1. Hotels	4.34	VG	1
2. Bed and Breakfast	4.11	VG	3
3. Hostels	4.08	VG	4.5
4. Resorts	4.15	VG	2
5. Airbnb	4.08	VG	4.5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	

Table 5 presented the status of potential eco-tourism as to accommodation with a composite mean of 4.15 verbally interpreted as very good. In the Province the tourists could find different types of accommodations from high-end to low-end service are available. The tourists could choose depending on their budget capacity. Comfortable hotels and accommodation facilities play a very important role in many or any tourist destination. Most likely, it is interpreted as influencing factor that has an impact in the way of life of the destination (Poudel, 2013).

All the given indicators were happened to be very good as noticed by the respondents. However, the highest type of accommodation in Aklan is the hotel with (4.34) weighted mean; resorts (4.15) and bed and breakfast (4.11) are as follows.

There are very few hotels that can be identified among municipalities in Aklan, but these are small scale hotels. It is far beyond to compare to many hotels within the Boracay Island. The concentration of hotel industry is in Boracay from high-end to budget accommodations. The famous Shangri-La's Resort and Spa is in Boracay Station 1, other branded Hotels are in Station 2 and Station 3 including those average and low-cost hotels and resorts. Hotels are definitely one of the fastest-growing sectors in the tourism sector and it is truly justified as accommodation is the key part in the development of any country or region's tourism.

Tourism and Hotel Industry always go hand in hand and the presence of enough hotels also adds value and quite a lot of factors and punches it within the region's economy. The Existence of a Hotel isn't enough to single-handedly boost a region's tourism, but they also give out a symptom of health tourism [11].

Meanwhile, the two least accommodations were hostels and airbnb with (4.08) but as very good as the three highest indicators. These low-cost accommodations are very few also in other municipalities. In city or town proper could find it. Since majority of the tourists intended to visit Boracay their accommodations were in Boracay.

Accommodation is a base of tourism industry as it is a vital and fundamental part of tourism supply. Tourists in their travel require location where they can rest and revive during their travel. As a result, commercial accommodations are in existence. There is great diversity in size and type of accommodation in relation to location and services provided. The services of accommodation facilities vary from each other based on their targeted customer groups [12].

Table 6. Status of Potential Eco-Tourism Sites in Aklan as to Food

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1. Variety of native dishes	4.38	VG	2
2. Availability of local products in the market such as delicacies and native fruits	4.41	VG	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.39</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	

Table 6 tells the status of potential eco-tourism in Aklan as to food with the composite mean of 4.39 or has a verbal interpretation of very good. Food and drink provide lasting memories that define a holiday or travel experience. In the province the native or local food specially seafood and delicacies play an important role, it contributes to the total or overall experience of the tourist visited Aklan.

For both indicators with the same verbal indicators as very good; with the availability of local products in the market such as delicacies and native fruits (4.41). Local products such pineapple fiber weaved are best seller. Similar with the local food like uraro, utap and the like are also being patronized by many tourists. Most destination used food as the main attraction with good marketing strategies are incorporated so to increase good consumption of many tourists has a little difference when it comes to weighted mean compared with the variety of native dishes which garnered a (4.38)? One of the native dishes is the "Inubarang

Manok” and “binakol” another chicken recipe in the province. While other food dishes are the grilled sea foods. Many tourists enjoyed these foods and make their dining experience more memorable.

Mostly the local products of Aklan are made of Piña weaving, for that matter weaving industry in the province does exist. These kinds of products can be observed as the tourists visit the souvenir shops. This industry is also associated to their one of the well-known and celebrated festival in Aklan, the Piña and Fiber festivals. Moreover, other local productions of delicacies are present like the “ginataang manok” and the “pasalubong” products like uraro and the like. While native fruit is banana. These factors have average impact in the tourism industry because the primary reason that really attracts the tourists of visiting the province is the Asia’s most famous beach the Boracay.

As food is an integral part of cultural experience, some believed that food tourism plays an important role in promoting destination marketing. Hence tourists are able to plan thoroughly which places to visit and what food or drink to try [13].

Table 7. Summary Table on the Status of Potential Eco-Tourism Sites in Aklan

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Festivities and Events	4.48	VG	1
2. Spots and Attraction	4.34	VG	3
3. Accommodation	4.15	VG	4
4. Food	4.39	VG	2
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	

Table 7 is the summary on the result of potential eco-tourism sites in province of Aklan as to food with a composite mean of 4.34 or verbally interpreted as very good.

The top two indicators based on the obtained weighted mean were the festivities and events (4.48) and food (4.39). Both indicators were verbally interpreted as very good. Subsequently, the main focus of discussion is the potential ecotourism of Aklan, the minds of the participants pertain much on the festivities and events. It gained a greater impact since these festivals stand as an important event among the locals. The local government spent much time for the celebration of the festivals as they organized it annually. Local festivals are increasingly being used as instruments for promoting tourism and boosting the regional economy. show modest but positive local growth, suggesting some justification for public assistance for local festivals as a tourism strategy [14].

While the least indicators but equally very good were as follows: spots and attraction (4.34) and accommodation (4.15). Among the participants as they assessed accommodation has a low impact for their mass tourism or commercial industry. Since tourists after attending festivals or events or visiting other attractions tend to turn to their primary itinerary which is in Boracay Island.

Hotels are a vital and essential part of the tourism industry. Today, hotels not only provide accommodation and meals but also offer a variety of other services as per the needs of the tourist/guest. For example, many hotels offer a health club, crèche, etc. as per the changing needs of the customer. Accommodation in the form of low budget lodges/hotels to world class luxury hotels is available at all the major tourist destinations to provide the tourist a home away from home. These are establishments that provide a place for the tourist to stay i.e., lodging facilities which are paid for the duration of the stay by the tourist [15].

Table 8. Preparedness of Aklan as to Government support

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Subsidy from Local and National Government in sustaining ecotourism sites	4.10	P	2.5
2. Integration of development and management plan of the grassroots community	4.10	P	2.5
3. Scientific assessment of the landscapes and seascapes	3.82	P	7
4. Share of local income	4.05	P	4
5. Education Fund Share	4.00	P	5
6. Construction repair and maintenance of school building facilities and equipment, research, purchase of books, etc.	3.99	P	6
7. Sports Development Fund	4.19	P	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>Prepared</b>	

Table 8 reveals the preparedness of Aklan as to government support has a composite mean of 4.03 as perceived they are prepared. The support of the Local Government is essential especially when it is about the development and improvement of the destination. The province of Aklan has on-going projects on the transportation or road facilities. Government framework for tourism policy making is therefore to maximize economic and social benefit from the tourism sector.

Based on the result the government is prepared to support and provide sports development fund with a weighted mean of (4.19) same with sustaining the eco-

tourism site as subsidized by the local and national government and the integration of development and management pan of the grassroots community (4.10) and the sharing of local income (4.05). It is not new to local governments to conduct and fund sports tournament. However, these events were never linked to any potential ecotourism sites since this kind of activity is irrelevant to such form of tourism. Sports activity cannot be associated with mangrove Eco Park unless it is for fund raising which will benefit the ecotourism as the case maybe. These councilors are actually referring to the sports development happening within the Barangay area. On the other hand, in Boracay sports tournament organized and sponsored by popular sports branded products are happening and well attended by many known personalities and tourists coming from different places from local and international.

Even to the least indicators the government is also prepared for the education fund share (4.00); in the construction repair and maintenance of school building facilities and equipment, research, purchase of books, etc. (3.99); and in conducting scientific assessment of the landscapes and seascapes (3.82). This is the least because this is less priority. This kind of project requires a lot of budget. Financial allocations were placed to different project proposals and other expenditures.

Table 9. Preparedness of Aklan as to Infrastructure

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Boracay Island Resort	4.50	HP	1
2. Kalibo International Airport	4.26	P	4
3. Caticlan Port	4.31	P	3
4. Aklan Circumferential Road	4.34	P	2
5. Nabas and Hydro Power in Madalag, Aklan	4.16	P	6
6. Sanguniang Bayan (SB) establish general wastewater treatment plant in Aklan	4.11	P	7
7. DENR sewerage system for all Boracay establishments	4.18	P	5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>Prepared</b>	

Table 9 exposes the preparedness of the Aklan as to infrastructures which obtained a composite mean of 4.27 as noted by the respondents as prepared.

In terms of infrastructure, Boracay Island Resort is highly prepared (4.50); while Aklan Circumferential Road (4.34) and Caticlan Port (4.31) are much lesser prepared.

Certainly, Boracay is highly prepared in terms of infrastructure to some extent it is well develop, highly commercialized, accommodate mass tourism for the

longest time, in fact in all areas of consideration in line to tourism industry have gone too far compared to other municipalities around Aklan. It is highly urbanized municipality, needless to say have an excellent economic output in the entire province.

Boracay is small island but the white, long sand beach served as an asset as the core tourist attraction, along the seashore and many beach resorts are promised to provide a leisure experience to the tourists [16].

The infrastructure of DENR sewerage system for all Boracay establishment (4.18) are prepared same with the Nabas and Hydro Power in Madalag, Aklan (4.16) and Sanguniang Bayan (SB) establish general wastewater treatment plant in Aklan (4.11).

Participants believed that the Sanguniang Bayan (SB) is prepared to establish the wastewater treatment plant; looking back from the past when Boracay was rehabilitated the agency able to function appropriately however, there is a need for improvement should take place. Like for instance, budget allocation for acquiring better equipment. Hence, it will have a remarkable and effective treatment plant for the quality and adequate supply of water.

Table 10. Preparedness of Aklan as to Marketing

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Banga-Libacdao Farm to market road	4.20	P	4
2. Libacdao road development project	4.11	P	5
3. Accessibility of road connecting to tourist spots and destination	4.09	P	6
4. Banga, Madalag, and Libacdao road network to transport abaca products, rice, corn, banana, cacao, vegetables and livestock production	4.26	P	3
5. Department of Tourism (DOT) include three popular island tourist destination of Palawan, Cebu and Boracay.	4.36	P	1
6. DOT release Civil Aeronautics Board guidelines for commercial air transportation serving Boracay Island.	4.30	P	2
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>Prepared</b>	

Table 10 pointed out the preparedness of Aklan as to marketing gained a composited mean of 4.22 as perceived by the respondents the province is prepared.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) include three popular island tourist destination of Palawan, Cebu and Boracay (4.36); DOT release Civil Aeronautics Board guidelines for commercial air transportation serving Boracay Island (4.30) and Banga, Madalag, and Libacdao road network to transport abaca products, rice, corn, banana, cacao, vegetables and livestock

production (4.26) were prepared for any marketing initiatives of the province.

DOT have implemented such marketing strategies to set a tour package wherein it offers to combine the top destination when it comes to tourist arrival: Palawan, Cebu and Boracay tour is very enticing tour adventure to many tourists. This can be considered a strong collaboration of local governments among the three provinces (Palawan-Cebu-Aklan). However, DOT perceived that they need to have aggressive marketing collaterals and strong ties with both local and private entities to obtain the desired output.

Aguila and Ragot, [17] emphasized the need of the local government to focus first on the implementation of marketing promotion of ecotourism.

Similarly, with the Banga-Libacao Farm to market road (4.20); Libacao road development project (4.11) and the accessibility of road connecting to tourist spots and destination were prepared for marketing.

In the context of accessibility of the said potential ecotourism sites is a long process to go. The participants are very much aware of the status of many road networks within the municipality. The location of such potential ecotourism is not as accessible as the Boracay. It demands huge budget for road construction and rehabilitation, improve transit routes to create better access connecting one area to the other. There is road access going to tourist spot however, improvement is much needed for safe transfer and travel.

The importance of a structure to support ecotourism needs to be emphasized. As Yilmaz [18], pointed out, there is a necessity of setting up a substructure and advertisement for Golhisar County to acquire a significant eco-tourism potential for its natural and cultural resources.

Table 11 refers to the summary on preparedness of Aklan with a composite mean of 4.17 which indicate that the province id prepared.

Table 11. Summary on the Preparedness of Aklan

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Government support	4.03	Prepared	3
2. Infrastructure	4.27	Prepared	1
3. Marketing	4.22	Prepared	2
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>Prepared</b>	

In fact, the infrastructure got the highest weighted mean of (4.27); while marketing (4.22) on the second slot finally, government support is the least with (4.03). but the three are the same with its verbal interpretation as prepared.

With the presence of Kalibo International Airport, seaport, road facilities the participants believed that Aklan is prepared. However, according to them such transportation or access facilities need to improve for better service to the public. Airport is small in land area the mere fact it is international airport, the seaport as well have the same concern the gall away is short and limited that there are some instances boat has to wait for another to depart; the boatman has to wait for his turn to occupy vacant space to embark his passenger. Many roads need to develop to create entry and exit point to another spots. Also, many roads need to rehabilitate or to reconstruct to become passable to many and different type of vehicles.

Abat-Perducho [19] cited Phanthavong [20], that ecotourism generates income for local residents, improve roads and build infrastructures, impacts on livelihood opportunities and job creation.

Table 12 Economic Aspects of Potential Ecotourism

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Eco-tourism generates income for the community	4.31	A	2.5
2. Eco-tourism provides employment for the locals	4.31	A	2.5
3. Extent of involvement of the community towards tourism industry	4.25	A	4
4. Investment and development to eco-tourism	4.18	A	5
5. Feasts are managed to promote local products and generate income, i.e. Kalibo Sto Nino, Ati-Atihan Festival, etc.	4.35	A	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

Table 12 presents the economic aspects of potential eco-tourism got a composite mean of 4.28 with verbal interpretation of agree.

Based on the result of the study the top indicators with the highest weighted mean respectively were the feasts as managed to promote local products and generate income, i.e., Kalibo Sto Nino, Ati-Atihan Festival, etc. (4.35); followed by eco-tourism generates income for the community and eco-tourism provides employment for the locals (4.31) and extent of involvement of the community towards tourism industry (4.25).

According to the participants, festival is income generating activity. It highlights local products in effect, it creates greater local products production. It gives opportunities to small scale business to improve their profit as leads to generate jobs among locals.

Achieving the aims in ecotourism depends on whether they are environmentally and ecologically

sustainable and economically applicable. Ecotourism helps in involving local community for the conservation of the ecology and biodiversity of the area that biodiversity in return provides the economic incentives to the local community [21].

Whereas the least indicator is the investment and development to eco-tourism (4.18) as verbally interpreted agree.

As elaborated by a few respondents investing to a less reliant business is a big risk. Developing a potential ecotourism site is a long process that the return of investment will take a long journey as well. In such situation, the development of ecotourism leaves in the hands of local government then became the least priority. Another argument given by the respondents, taking care of the preservation and conservation of ecotourism has a low impact to a mass tourism and commercialized industry. Unless there is a huge budget to allocate for the development of facilities suited for tourist consumption capabilities. Creation of tourist adventure activities that would really attract the tourist to come and go and return if they wanted to is highly encourage.

The study of Cornejo, et al [22], confirmed in his finding ecotourism has a positive impact on the economic aspect of the destination. Most of their stakeholders looked forward for more economic gains and opportunities to uplift the quality of life of the community. Likewise, in the study of Soreda and Estananto [23], revealed that ecotourism in their barangay provided additional source of income to the community residents, particularly for the fisher folks and women who have skills in cooking.

Table 13. Health Aspects of Potential Eco-tourism

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Medical facilities are available within the place	4.25	A	1
2. Medical services are available for tourists	4.21	A	3
3. Availability and accessibility of medical facilities and services to locale	4.23	A	2
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

Table 13 refers to the health aspects of potential eco-tourism has a composite mean of 4.23 as agreed by the respondents. Health is also considered essential aspect that the very tourism management has to look into with special attention for the safety of the community, tourist and other stakeholders in the industry. In the province, health desk is placed to take

care of the tourist. In the seaport going to Boracay Island it can be observed.

The topmost indicator is the medical facilities are available within the place (4.25); followed by availability and accessibility of medical facilities and services to locale (4.23) and the least refers to the medical services are available for tourists (4.21). all indicators were agreed by the respondents as one of the aspects of potential eco-tourism.

The tourism sector provides opportunities arising from the improvement of health services to residents, that could strengthen a personalized service offer targeting tourists as well. This could be exploited to increase attractiveness of internal areas as well as of out of season offers, more sustainably by including activities that positively impact health. Traveling for health and wellness is one of the most important tourist patterns of economic returns generated by the tourism industry, tourist destinations and the health sector [24]. The participants explained that medical clinics are available for simple cases and for first aid situations. But for complicated medical cases the patient needs to send bigger hospitals located in the city.

While the medical clinic, medical staff and doctor are available in the place of municipality. Further, the medical services for emergency cases that sometimes encountered by many tourists are not appropriate for them. This medical clinic services are good for initial assistance like first aid procedures. Therefore, first aid procedure will be performed by the medical practitioners henceforward, send to the city where complete medical facilities are present for proper medical attention. Hospitals, medical centers and health resorts an accommodation, contributing to this valuable tourism program [24].

Table 14 reveals the environment aspects of potential eco-tourism with a composite mean of 4.20 as verbally interpreted as agree.

Table 14. Environment Aspects of Eco-tourism

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Road networks for easy access to different places in Aklan	4.15	A	4
2. Bridges linking tourists' destinations are accessible	4.19	A	3
3. Presence of military and police personnel for safety peace and Order	4.25	A	1
4. Immediate response of National Disaster and Response Units in case of emergency.	4.23	A	2
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

In the context of environment aspects, the presence of military and police personnel for safety peace and

order obtained the highest weighted mean of (4.25); followed by Immediate response of National Disaster and Response Units in case of emergency (4.23) and bridges linking tourists' destinations are accessible (4.19). All indicators noted with verbal interpretation as agree.

Visibility of the military and police enforcers can be observed in the place. There are also headquarters for each of the municipality.

Cornejo, et al [22], found that development of values and social and cultural exchange matters most despite the possible rise of crime rate, overcrowding of the place and increased outdoor and nightlife activities.

The least is pertaining to the road networks for easy access to different places in Aklan with (4.15) as verbally interpreted agree.

The participants confirmed the initiatives of the local government in establishing, reconstructing and rehabilitating many roads within its municipalities. Most especially the main or national roads connecting with other provinces are part the Province's development plan. The tourists viewed traffic congestion, discomfort when moving from one site to another, and distance travelled as major issues. Hence, having a good infrastructure to facilitate ease of flow of vehicles is an important issue in ecotourism. The safety and security of tourists are thus important components to boost the popularity of ecotourism [25].

Table 15. Preservation and Conservation Aspects of Potential Eco-tourism

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Heritage sites are well maintained	3.99	A	1
2. Archaeological sites are preserved	3.86	A	2
3. Infrastructure development are sustained	3.80	A	3
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

Table 15 is the preservation and conservation aspects of the potential eco-tourism which obtained a composite mean of 3.88 as agreed by the respondents.

In the province preservation and conservation of the eco-tourism is being done already and continuously sustain. In fact, the mangrove in Bakhawan and Ibajay are being maintain by the government. Ecotourism contributes

to conservation or preservation of the natural resources and promotes stewardship of natural and cultural resources Ecotourism should be effectively managed for the long-term through minimal negative impacts on the host environment [21].

Based on the result, heritage sites are well maintained it has the highest weighted mean of (3.99);

next the preservation of archaeological sites (3.86) and the sustained infrastructure development (3.80). The respondents agreed that the three were preserved and conserved. The province maintained those cultural, religious and heritage sites. In fact, there are museums that being catered to the tourists as a secondary itinerary.

Similarly, with the infrastructure within the province were sustained. Also, it developed infrastructure to enhance the public service among locals and tourists. In addition, it opened the province to other provinces which leads to become accessible.

Table 16. Summary Table on the Different Aspects of Potential Eco-tourism

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Economic Aspect	4.28	A	1
2. Health Aspect	4.23	A	2
3. Environment Aspect	4.20	A	3
4. Preservation and Conservation	3.88	A	4
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

Table 16 is the summary on the different aspects of potential eco-tourism with a composite mean of 4.15 and verbally interpreted as agree.

The topmost aspect refers to the economic aspect (4.28); followed by health aspect (4.23) and environment aspect (4.20). all of them were agreed by the respondents.

The respondents confirmed that being one of the most visited provinces mainly because of Boracay greatly contributed a lot to the economic standing and growth of Aklan. On a positive note, Abat-Parducho [19], stated that ecotourism activities generate income for local residents, improve roads and build infrastructures, as well as promote the heritage of the locality. It was reiterated that the most significant feature of the tourism industry is its capacity to generate large-scale employment opportunities and utilize natural resources for the economic benefit of the population. It also adds value to a multitude of human-made attractions and employs a large number of women and young people in hotels, airline services, travel agencies and the like [26].

The least is the preservation and conservation to which with a weighted mean of (3.88) as verbally interpreted as agree. The local government as further elaborated by the respondents, there is initiatives being done for the preservation and conservation however, it is not the top priority as of this moment because of the constraints in budget allocation.

The respondents in the study of Cornejo, et al [22] agreed on the potential impact of ecotourism in terms of environmental, socio-cultural and economic effects. Environmental impact ranked first among the different factors. On contrary, from Abat-Perducho [19], concluded that tourism is not acceptable if it harms the environment, damages culture and exploits and degrades the people, especially women and children. In the same vein, Hossen, et al [27] pointed out the negative impacts of tourism. These are on the cultural heritage and the environment of the area which result in severe environmental degradation especially ecological sensitive areas.

Table 17 presents the comparison of responses on responses when grouped according to profile. It was observed that there was a significant difference on government support (0.018) and preservation and conservation (0.010) when grouped according to occupation since the obtained p-values were less than 0.05 alpha level. Based on the post hoc test conducted, it was found out that Provincial DOT Officer have greater assessment on the above-mentioned variable.

On the other hand, other variables do not show significant difference, thus the responses do not differ statistically. From the comparison of responses on the status of potential eco-tourism as to festivities and events when grouped according to profile; it was observed that there was a significant difference on occupation. Based on the post hoc test conducted, it was found out that Provincial DOT Officer have greater assessment on festivities and events.

The DOT has a major role in managing and conducting regional festivals and regional or national events. This is in line with their interest to at least avail to sustain or maintain the cultural aspect of the province especially if the province or site is a catch basin of many tourists.

The initiatives building up the significant festivals and events are in the hands of their department. Including the promotions and coordination to the proper authorities is within their duties and responsibilities.

Moreover, in the comparison of responses on the preparedness as to government support when grouped according to profile; it was observed that there was a significant difference on occupation based on the post hoc test conducted, it was found out that Provincial DOT Officer have greater assessment on government support.

Table 17. Difference on the responses when Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variables	F-value	p-value	I
<b>Age</b>			
Festivities and Events	1.701	0.159	NS
Spots and Attraction	0.038	0.997	NS
Accommodation	0.484	0.747	NS
Food	2.139	0.084	NS
Government Support	2.324	0.064	NS
Infrastructure	0.566	0.688	NS
Marketing	1.947	0.111	NS
Economic	1.968	0.108	NS
Health	1.456	0.224	NS
Environment	2.332	0.063	NS
Preservation and Conservation	1.216	0.311	NS
Festivities and Events	0.324	0.324	NS
Spots and Attraction	0.353	0.353	NS
Accommodation	0.567	0.567	NS
Food	0.991	0.991	NS
Government Support	0.384	0.702	NS
Infrastructure	1.738	0.086	NS
Marketing	0.826	0.411	NS
Economic	1.476	0.144	NS
Health	0.802	0.425	NS
Environment	1.225	0.224	NS
Preservation and Conservation	0.306	0.761	NS
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
Festivities and Events	2.719	0.072	NS
Spots and Attraction	1.636	0.201	NS
Accommodation	0.248	0.781	NS
Food	2.371	0.100	NS
Government Support	0.090	0.914	NS
Infrastructure	0.812	0.448	NS
Marketing	0.606	0.548	NS
Economic	2.363	0.101	NS
Health	2.071	0.133	NS
Environment	0.897	0.412	NS
Preservation and Conservation	1.069	0.348	NS
<b>Occupation</b>			
Festivities and Events	7.790	0.001	S
Spots and Attraction	0.198	0.820	NS
Accommodation	1.303	0.278	NS
Food	0.070	0.933	NS
Government Support	4.254	0.018	S
Infrastructure	2.847	0.064	NS
Marketing	1.370	0.260	NS
Economic	1.613	0.206	NS
Health	1.167	0.317	NS
Environment	1.709	0.188	NS
Preservation and Conservation	4.917	0.010	S

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

The Provincial DOT officer believed that their department and the local government are prepared to support whatever endeavor relevant to securing, protecting and sustaining the potential ecotourism of the province.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) shall be the primary government agency charged with the responsibility to encourage, promote, and develop

tourism as a major socio-economic. Moreover, The Tourism Services and Regional Offices Sector are tasked to ensure the pleasant entry, stay, and exit of tourists. It formulates standards of quantity and efficiency for tourism-oriented establishments, among others, done through an accreditation system. Tourist establishments' compliance to policies are monitored to make sure that their facilities and services are operated and maintained according to acceptable international norms. The Sector also supervises DOT's regional operations established to implement the policies, plans, programs, and regulations of the Department and to maintain the delivery of efficient and effective frontline services for the tourism industry [28].

Further, the comparison of responses on the preservation and conservation aspect of potential ecotourism when grouped according to profile; it was observed that there was a significant difference on occupation based on the post hoc test conducted, it was found out that councilors have greater assessment on the above-mentioned aspect.

The councilors supported the preservation and conservation of the ecotourism. Prior to their experience to Boracay they are highly aware of the importance of the said aspect. They believed by doing so, it will boost the economic, cultural and environmental aspects of many municipalities who keep safe such potential ecotourism sites.

Table 18 (Appendix) refers to the proposed Eco-Tourism Development Plan was adapted and modified from amended Medium Term Strategic Action Plan of the National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP) 2016-2022; it is the continuation of the NTDP of 2011-2016. The researcher has taken and included the relevant strategies and action plan elements that can particularly contribute to the growth of the eco-tourism in the Province of Aklan more so, can utilize in full range for the development and enhancement of the facilities and services, tourism circuits and development areas to gain expansion and new opportunities to all the tourism stakeholders.

In this case, the aims to intensify the transport infrastructure development will improvement the international airport terminal operations, cruising industry, and the expansion of the tourism road infrastructure to develop the tourism circuits. Second, in pursuing the travel facilitation incentives

for amending haul regulations and fees. Third, attracting the investment and improve business environment will expand the transportation facilities

and services, accommodation and promotions campaign through private investments in this sector.

While the fourth is about the expansion of product development Initiatives by sustaining the tourism resources to which may result to greater connectivity to Public and Private sectors and come closer to the local communities. Fifth, the implement of expanded marketing program for foreign markets using the promotional tagline "It's more fun in the Philippines" and local branding campaign of Aklan Province: "Feel Alive, Feel Aklan". Also, be the MICE venue co-inside with tourism promotions campaign with special focus on farm and ecotourism sites. Sixth, enhancing the HR capacity and improve the service standards for extreme labor-intensive source of tourism and hospitality employment.

Further, the seventh will promote the initiatives in embracing quality standards to regulate the certification and accreditation processes of tourism enterprises in the province. Eighth, in supporting the MSME Development; this calls for the setting up of an institute of tourism competitiveness, support the qualified travel and tourism entrepreneurs and to boost productivity on indigenous materials in producing quality products. Ninth, is expanding and promoting the cultural offerings.

This area will expand the cultural offerings of the tourism products and eco-tourism sites and destinations in the province of Aklan. Tenth, preserving the environment and promote climate change adaptation to continuously protecting the unique, authentic, and environment-friendly destinations and products. Lastly, the implementation of risks and crisis management programs basically to manage properly the tourism resources, travelers and other stakeholders. Also, addressing the tourism risks and crisis requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders and from travel industry partners to include rescue, medical, and police authorities.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Most of the respondents belong to ages 51 to 60 years old, male, college graduate and councilors. The most visited potential eco-tourism sites were Katunggan it Ibajay, Ibajay, Bakhawan Eco Park, Kalibo and Hinugtan White Beach, Buruanga. While the least were Motag Living Museum, Malay, Nabaoy River, Malay, Pawa Wind Farm, Nabas and Hacienda Maria, Buruanga. Based on the results of the study festivities and events, food, spots and attraction and accommodation contributed positively to the

potentiality of the eco-tourism sites in Aklan while, the different aspects of potential eco-tourism have an impact to the community. The researcher was able to propose an eco-tourism development plan for Aklan.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

There may be private and local government collaboration on initiating aggressive support to all endeavors for the improvement of the eco-tourism sites specifically in the development of infrastructures and marketing. The DOT Aklan may direct the private entities to pursue environmental projects and eco programs promoting the eco-tourism of the province. The local government and the community may work together to preserve the cultural aspect of the Aklan and conserve the natural resources within the eco-tourism sites. The Local Government units of Aklan and the private sectors may utilize the proposed eco-tourism development plan of the researcher to improve the identified sites. The councilors may coordinate with the tourism officers and private sectors in assessing needs for the improvement of the eco-tourism sites from each municipality. Also, encourage the community to participate to any organized event and projects. The future researcher may conduct similar study using different variables such as: community-based engagement and tourists' participation in the potential eco-tourism sites elsewhere since the paper is only limited to the status of eco-tourism as well as level of preparedness of Aklan in terms of: government support, infrastructure and marketing; and considering the aspects of potential eco-tourism in terms of: economic, health and environmental aspect and preservation and conservation.

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APPENDIX

Table 18. Proposed Eco-Tourism Development Plan Based on the Result of the Study

KSA / Objectives	Strategy	Description of Activities	Success Indicators
<b>1. Potential Eco-Tourism Sites in terms of:</b>			
<b>Festivities and Events</b>  To strengthen environmental advocacy embedded to festivities and events	Promote farm and eco-tourism through incorporating to annual Tourism Special Events calendar	Develop a Tourism Calendar of events consisting of existing and new events such as: culinary shows, musical and cultural events, showcasing the farm and eco-tourism etc.	Recognizing the new events for farm and eco-tourism
<b>Spots and Attraction</b>  To add more pilgrimage activities	Enhance and support regional festivals which carry environmental advocacy	DOT representatives design a set of criteria to be applied to festivals organized by LGUs and private entities to ascertain environmental accuracy and appropriateness	Developing and promoting of farm and eco-tourism programs implemented province wide
<b>Accommodation</b>  To improve the status of hostels and Airbnb	With the cooperation of community and spearhead by religious groups and the church may conduct numbers of pilgrimage activities	Pursue improvement of church sites and facilities in conformity with LGU and community tourism plans	strengthening the religious or church tourism of the province
<b>Food</b>  To enhance the native dishes	Continue the support for restoration and conservation projects in ecotourism heritage sites and interpretation centers	DOT Regional Offices are to come up with a shortlist of heritage and ecological sites requiring enhancement and restoration and information/interpretation centers	Restoring ecotourism and heritage sites
	Attract investments in hotels/resorts to fill in projected supply gaps	The hostels and Airbnb owners / investors may capitalize or finance to improve their services and facilities	Hostels and Airbnb becoming competitive in terms of their services and facilities from other type of accommodation
	The association of hostels and Airbnb may work together to broaden their network to reach out their target market	Collaboration among LGUs, Owners / investors for accreditation and marketing	Establishing and creating public awareness
	Empower the destination marketing management in promoting small scale accommodation	Conduct roadshows / investment missions among the hotel / resort / real estate industry stakeholders and investment promotions agencies	Establishing and creating equal opportunities among small scale accommodates through marketing collaterals and initiatives
	Conduct workshop / training to improve culinary skills	Empower the food business owners and community with knowledge on product innovations and marketing values	The local will be empowered with culinary skills and able to innovate their native dishes
	Empower the destination marketing management in promoting the local dishes and products and handicrafts	Strengthened marketing drive or campaign to product branding	Developing and producing innovative local products  It broadened the public awareness on the local dishes and products, and handicrafts
<b>2. Preparedness of Aklan in terms of:</b>			
<b>Government support</b>  To strengthen the conduct of scientific assessment of the landscapes and seascapes	LGU's conduct needs analysis study to determine the appropriate approach to improve the land and water resources	Review shortlist of existing sites as identified in the existing plan and introduce improvements as necessary with community involvement	Aklan can discover or develop other itineraries within the province

<p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <p>To sustain the general water waste treatment plant in Aklan</p> <p><b>Marketing</b></p> <p>To expand the accessibility of road connecting to tourist spots and destination in Aklan</p>	<p>With DENR, develop a short list of nature parks or ecotourism sites and marine sanctuaries that can be developed for low density recreation and educational purposes and opened up for private sector investment in trails (walking and biking), picnic sites, camping grounds, eco-lodges where feasible, and other support facilities</p> <p>Procuring water waste treatment plant</p> <p>The Local government may allot budget for road construction and improvement</p>	<p>Improve trails and introduce new facilities such as bike trails, camping sites, picnic ground's view decks, eco lodges, in existing parks</p> <p>Improve the wastewater treatment in Aklan protecting the seas and fresh water supplies</p> <p>Invest in new gateways to service future destinations</p>	<p>Enhancing ecotourism sites</p> <p>Availability of fresh clean water supply for the locals and tourists</p> <p>The potential eco-tourism became accessible to the public and be an option to visit</p>
<p><b>3. Aspects of potential eco-tourism in terms of:</b></p>			
<p><b>Economics</b></p> <p>To sustain Investment and development to farm and eco-tourism</p> <p><b>Health Aspects</b></p> <p>To reinforce medical services available for tourists</p> <p><b>Environment</b></p> <p>To enhance the road networks for easy access to different places in Aklan</p> <p><b>Preservation and Conservation</b></p> <p>To strengthen the Infrastructure development</p>	<p>Develop the potential eco-tourism as a tourist destination through the help of investors</p> <p>The local government may allocate budget to enhance the medical service situated within the place of potential eco-tourism</p> <p>The local government may improve or develop road access (point of entry and exit)</p> <p>The local government may restore and affirm the heritage and archaeological sites as a tourist destination in the province aside from having natural attraction</p>	<p>Support the development of potential eco-tourism sites concepts so as to expand the cruise products and marine research destination specifically the mangrove areas, beaches and inland water</p> <p>Sustain the medical services and facilities</p> <p>Pursue the development of tourism circuits by linking tourism development areas via road and sea (if applicable) connectivity of transport routes linking potential ecotourism sites, urban service centers and accommodation facilities of varying categories</p> <p>Launch a domestic tourism campaign to promote new destinations with special focus on cultural, historical and ecological elements</p>	<p>There will be economic growth as contributed by the different tourism and hospitality sectors</p> <p>Aklan earned the trust of the tourists through safety and security mechanism implemented by the presence of medical services</p> <p>Potential eco-tourism became accessible through its road and port networks, facilities and support services</p> <p>Aklan will became a full package tourist destination that offers combined natural, cultural and historical attractions</p>