

MALACAÑANG  
MANILA

MFR 2701

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO 403

ADOPTING A PHILIPPINE TOURISM HIGHWAY PROGRAM TO FURTHER  
DEVELOP AND PROMOTE THE TOURISM POTENTIALS OF THE COUNTRY  
AND CREATING THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE THEREOF

**WHEREAS**, it is the policy of the State to develop and promote the tourism potentials of the country as part of national development efforts for the furtherance of the empowerment of the Filipino people and continued enhancement of the competitiveness of the Philippine economy;

**WHEREAS**, the National Tourism Program of the Department of Tourism provides for a focused and sustained approach to develop and promote the tourism areas of the country among domestic and foreign tourists;

**WHEREAS**, there is a need to establish an integrating mechanism to ensure focused and sustained government efforts to ensure the viability of the tourism areas, in terms of safe, easy and affordable access to domestic and foreign tourists;

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, FIDEL V. RAMOS, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:

**Section 1. Establishment of the Philippine Tourism Highway Program.** There is hereby adopted a Philippine Tourism Highway Program to serve as an integrating mechanism for the developmental and promotional efforts of government for the tourism areas of the country. It shall cover the national road network where tourism areas are located and which are necessarily the "scenic spot" portion of the tourism highway showcasing the splendor and beauty of the local landscape as well as its tourism attractions. Tourism areas shall include historical and other tourist attractions easily accessible through the tourism highway.

**Section 2. Framework.** The Philippines Tourism Highway Program shall be pursued to link the country's tourism areas and attractions through the national highway system, to the north from Manila to Laoag City via the Cagayan valley Region and to the south from Manila to Mindanao via the Bicol and Eastern Visayas Regions. This shall promote the development and preservation of the tourism areas, as well as ensure their viability by enhancing their accessibility, safety, and affordability to domestic and foreign tourists.

IN REPLYING, PLEASE CITE:

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**Section 3. Presidential Task Force.** There is hereby also created a Presidential Task Force to coordinate the effective implementation of this Order. It shall be chaired by the DOT Secretary with the DPWH Secretary as Vice Chairman and the Secretaries of DILG, DTI, DA, DENR, DOE, DOTC, DND and Heads of the National Historical Institute, National Power Corporation, National Youth Commission, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Philippine Travel Agencies Association, and the Philippine Tour Operators Association, as members. As may be necessary, the Chairperson may expand the composition of the Task Force.

**Section 4. Coverage.** The road and tourism area coverage of the Program shall be identified by the Task Force, in coordination with the concerned regional tourism councils. The appropriate marker for these areas shall be caused to be installed by the Task Force, which shall also, in coordination with concerned agencies and LGUs, regulate and monitor the construction of structures and other activities that may erode the aesthetic value, obstruct a scenic view or cause the degradation of these tourism areas.

**Section 5. Program Components.** The Task Force shall immediately formulate the project components of the Philippine Tourism Highway Program, including the identification of fund sources for the implementation thereof. These shall include the enhancement of the existing tourism attractions, to include the tourism-science-technology centers and battle monuments and war memorial markers; the construction and proper upkeep of the rest areas and view decks along the tourism highway; and the provision of adequate basic services (i.e., electricity, transportation and telecommunication facilities, and maintenance of peace and order). Also included are the implementation of the freedom trail program of the National Centennial Commission; the DTI-Program showcasing local products and the DOT Home-Stay Program.

**Section 6. Program Implementation.** The implementation of the project components of the Program shall be drawn from the funds of their respective implementing agencies which shall ensure their completion in time for the celebration of the centennial of Philippine independence. To augment the funding requirement for Program implementation, the Task Force may tap private sector investments under BOT schemes and/or donation from foreign and local organizations and financing groups.

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**Section 7. Private Sector Participation.** The active participation of the private sector, including the youth groups and non-government organizations (NGOs) be tapped in the implementation of the Tourism Highway Program. This may include the involvement of the youth groups and non-government organizations in the maintenance of the rest areas; the business sector in the establishment of rest areas (one-stop tourism centers) in their respective localities; and the gasoline station operators in creating a more conducive tourism environment along the tourism highway.

**Section 8. Secretariat Support.** The DOT shall establish a Secretariat to provide technical and administrative support to the Task Force in the implementation of this Order. Where necessary, the Task Force may tap the assistance and cooperation of other government agencies and/or instrumentalities to effectively discharge its duties and functions.

**Section 9. Operational Budget.** A total of P25 Million shall be allocated from the Trust Liability Account and Savings of the DOT and its attached agencies, to fund the initial year operation of the Task Force, subject to existing accounting and auditing rules and regulations. The Task Force's operational budget for the succeeding years shall be included in the annual budgetary appropriation of the DOT.

**Section 10. Submission of Report.** The Task Force shall submit to the President a regular report on its activities, including policy and program recommendations to enhance the implementation of the Philippine Tourism Highway Program.

**Section 11. Effectivity** This Order shall take effect immediately.

**DONE** in the City of Manila, this 28th day of February in the Year of Our Lord, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety-Seven.

By the President:

  
**RUBEN D. TORRES**  
Executive Secretary



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Date

