Building the Participatory Approach: 
*The case of Batanes Observatory, Philippines*
BATANES JOINS UNWTO INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OBSERVATORIES
The Batanes Islands

18,831 Population
6 Municipalities
38 Tour Operators
52 Accommodations*  
(1 Hotel, Mabuhay Accommodations, and Homestays)
45,439 2017-2019 Inbound Tourist Arrival
Republic Act No. 8991

Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List

Extensive ecosystem with 23,000 HA land area and 450,000 HA marine area

Home of the Indigenous People – The Ivatans

A place of emotional appeal

Republic Act No. 8991
Vision

A well-preserved natural and cultural environment that supports sustainable tourism, promotes heritage conservation and social equity through healthy collaboration and data from the Observatory.

Objectives

• **Build a participatory approach** by creating awareness and supporting capacity-building in sustainability and resiliency among tourism stakeholders.

• **Develop and provide methodological references and recommendations for a sustainable and resilient Batanes**.

• **Systematic monitoring and evaluation of indicators of sustainability and resiliency in support of future decision and policy-making**.

• **Identify and disseminate good practices in the process of facilitating the exchange and comparison of information**.

• **Promote a condition of balanced tourism that empowers and legitimizes the Ivatan’s control over its activities and management practices**.
Participatory Process

1. Building awareness among local stakeholders
2. Establishing and fostering a strong support system
3. Forming and engagement of a local group
Building awareness among local stakeholders

- Stakeholders’ Mapping
  - Provincial Government of Batanes (PGB)
  - Batanes State College (BSC)
  - Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Batanes (DENR)
  - National Commission on Indigenous Peoples Batanes (NCIP-Batanes)

Establishing and fostering a strong support system

- Issuance Executive Order 34
- Formal partnership of the University of the Philippines Diliman with PGB and BSC
- Endorsement Campaign
Forming and engagement of a local group

- Setting up a Technical Working Group (TWG)
- Needs assessment on sustainability issues
- Identification of priority areas: Governance, Resident Satisfaction, Carrying Capacity and Solid Waste

Indicator Sets:
Governance, Resident Satisfaction, Economic Benefits, Solid Waste, Cultural Integrity and Biodiversity

Methodological References
- Series of TWG meetings across three Islands
- Interviews with residents and local administrators
- Document analysis
- Pilot study on the impact of COVID-19 on local tourism
- Full-blast survey on core issues/priority areas
Key emergent issue areas

- Waste management
- Food security
- Labor / Human Resources profiling
- Expansion on tourism activities
- Residential conversion into tourism facilities
- Transportation management system that addresses road congestion
- Balance of culture and environmental policies, laws and ordinances
- Carrying capacity definition and observance

Four Priority Areas

- Governance
- Solid waste management
- Physical carrying capacity
- Resident satisfaction
Indicator Sets (Phase One)

**Solid Waste Management**
- Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office
- *Sangguniang Panlalawigan* (SP) Committee on Environment
- Environment and Natural Resources Office

**Economic Benefits**
- Municipal Tourism Officers
- Residents' Association
- SP - Committee on Tourism
- Department of Agriculture

**Local Satisfaction**
- National Commission on Indigenous People
  Batanes
- SP - Committee on Culture
- Batanes Residents' Association

**Governance**
- Municipal Planning and Development Officers
- Provincial Planning and Development Officer
- Provincial Tourism Council
- Batanes State College

**Biodiversity**
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources
  Batanes
- Protected Areas Management Bureau
- Biodiversity Assessment Monitoring System Office
- Batanes Wildlife Conservation Society

**Cultural Integrity**
- National Commission on Indigenous People
  Batanes
- Batanes Heritage Conservation Corps., Inc.
- SP - Committee on Culture

*local legislative branch of the municipality*
BTHMC Roadmap (2019–2023)

2019
- Stakeholders mapping
- Ethics clearance secured
- Endorsement campaign at the local and national levels

2020
- Creation of Technical Working Group with 22 members
- Series of stakeholder workshops aid the identification of priority areas
- First application to INSTO March 15, 2020

2021
- Creation of EO 34
- Virtual TWG meetings held
- Initial studies on the effect of the pandemic on the Ivatans

2022-2023
- Research activities resumed
- Revised applications 2 April 2022 and 25 November 2022
- Identification of indicators to be monitored, including Cultural Integrity and Biodiversity
- Final submission to INSTO 8 May 2023
Looking into the future

Acceptance into INSTO on 16 June 2023

2022-2023
- Governance
- Solid Waste
- Local Satisfaction
- Physical Carrying Capacity

2023-2024
- Economic Benefits
- Tourism
- Seasonality
- Employment
- Water Waste Management

2024-2025
- Climate Change
- Water Management
- Energy
- Accessibility

Continuous monitoring of indicators
Building awareness among local stakeholders

Capacity-building

Empowered & inclusive decision & policy-making

Knowledge and experience sharing

Shared meaning and purpose
well-preserved natural and cultural environment
heritage conservation
social equity
healthy collaboration

Systematic monitoring & evaluation of indicator sets

Methodological references and recommendations

Establishing and fostering a strong support system

Forming and engagement of a local group
Batanes, The Philippines – UNWTO INSTO

Home (breathtakingbatanes.com)