

PALAWAN COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF

The year 2020 provided so much challenges and opportunities for the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) and its Staff as the world battles against the COVID-19 pandemic. The unprecedented year made everyone realize the strong connection between society and the environment as evidence shows the zoonotic nature of the COVID-19 virus.

In spite of all odds, the PCSD and its professional support staff, the PCSD Staff, continued the implementation of Republic Act 7611 and other mandated laws in Palawan, the implementation of which are linked to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030) and the importance of recognizing the strong link between people, society and planet.

The agency together with partners and the Palawan community attained and, in some cases, exceeded its targets for the year under the eight major activities of the Palawan ECAN Management Program, as committed under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of 2020, in spite of the limitations brought about by pandemic. The Budget Utilization Rate (BUR) of the agency is 94%. The PCSD and the PCSDS continued with its mandate and delivered accomplishments under its eight key areas.

The Council passed and adopted 61 resolutions and policies. These include the Criteria for determination of List of Economically Important Species (EIS), the Mouse Deer Management Plan for Balabac, the Classification of 4 Caves (Ille, Mudlom, Sangaran, and Sambanon), Adopting the Fisheries Administrative Order (FAO) 265 on lobster, and the policy on Payments for Ecosystem Services. The Council likewise submitted to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan the proposed chainsaw policy entitled, “An Ordinance Regulating the Possession, Transport, Sale and Repair of Chainsaw Units in the Province of Palawan and Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof”. Under its prosecution function, the PCSD Adjudication Board (PAB) with the assistance of the PCSD Staff, resolved 52 administrative cases involving violations of PCSD policies related to the implementation of Republic Act 7611 (RA 7611), The Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP) for Palawan Act and environmental laws under its mandate, the Chainsaw Act, Wildlife Act, Caves Act.



Figure 17.1 The PCSD in virtual session, (both in the right picture) including Vice Governor Victorino Dennis M. Socrates, PCSD Vice Chair (right) and PCSDS Executive Director Teodoro Jose S. Matta

ECAN Zoning and Mainstreaming

The ECAN Zones Map serves as both management and regulatory tool for Palawan as the province pursues sustainable development. It provides areas for development and areas for strict protection to ensure that ecosystem goods and services vital to sustainable development are continuously being provided. For the year 2020, the PCSD Staff worked on and was able to recommend and approved by the PCSD the updated ECAN Zones Map of the following municipalities: Dumarán (coastal), Roxas (coastal), Coron (coastal), Quezon (terrestrial, portion only: Lipuan Point, Panitian). Lastly, Tribal Ancestral Zones (TAZ) Management Plan was developed for the Indigenous People’s Community of Cabayugan, Puerto Princesa City. Furthermore, the staff reviewed the CLUP of the Municipalities of Quezon and Rizal for the identification and declaration of Critical Watersheds within the municipalities and assessed the Ecological SWMPs of the Municipalities of Kalayaan, Culion, and El Nido. The Kalayaan ESWMP was approved by the PCSD.

Operation of Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP) Clearance System

On-ground implementation of sustainable development policies was a challenge due to the pandemic. The issuance of clearances and permits, a regular function of the organization, requires innovative solutions. The PCSDS in collaboration with the USAID Wildlife Protect Project developed and implemented a web-based information management platform known as the Biodiversity Resources Access Information Network (BRAIN) System. The BRAIN is a comprehensive environmental law enforcement management information system reporting environmental violations available to the public. The BRAIN System is a user-driven online and offline platform that combines inter-agency coordination mechanism and alert system, compliance and threats monitoring, enforcement and case management, online permitting, tracking and geospatial analysis, intelligence, and predictive capabilities to proactively respond to potential violations, environmental law enforcement management information system, and public reporting system. Currently, BRAIN System is available for online permitting and “Sumbong” function for reporting environmental violations. With the help of the BRAIN platform, the PCSD and the PCSD Staff issued 114 SEP Clearances, 138 ECAN Zoning Certifications, 4,768 wildlife-related permits, and 214 chainsaw-related permits.

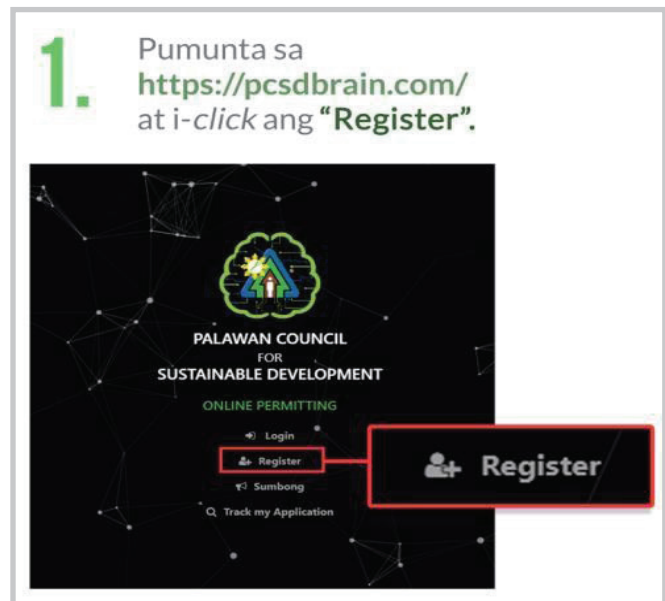


Figure 17.2 The Biodiversity Resources Access Information Network (BRAIN)

Enforcement of SEP Law, Wildlife Act, Chainsaw Act and Cave Act

The men and women of the PCSDS had been busy with ensuring that on-ground implementation of environment-related policies were carried out. The 20 PCSDS established Wildlife Traffic Monitoring Units (WTMUs) located in 17 municipalities actively pursued environmental law enforcement in spite of restriction in movement due to the pandemic. The activities include 147,131 assorted cargoes inspected, 46,786 boxes of Reef Fish for Food (RFF) and other species inspected, and 22 confiscations made. In addition, 2,000 tons of giant clams were confiscated at Brgy. Igang-Igang, Bataraza. In addition, the agency was able to receive/rescue 167 wildlife species.

Advocacy, Communications and Education

The continuing efforts towards a more caring citizenry for the environment while aspiring for an inclusive development, targeted our people through innovative and creative efforts and strategies, taking advantage of the social media and the support of our partners, especially the local government units, the civil society and the private sector. Under its Environmental Education and Extension, the PCSDS organized three (3) environmental learning events. These include two webinars with online livestream on PCSDS Facebook page: Youth Sustainability Leadership Virtual Camp and the Blue Environment: Coastal and Marine. Also conducted was a Teacher's Training on Wildlife Conservation attended by elementary teachers and DepED supervisors from different schools of the City of Puerto Princesa. To further reach out to the Palawan community and partners during this time, the staff organized 23 IEC campaigns to communities, public and private schools, and other groups across Palawan, and continued its weekly broadcast of the PCSDS Radio Program "SEP Ating Batas." Furthermore, the staff under its regular activities developed articles, briefers, and stories (PCSDS updates, environmental celebrations, press releases).



Figure 17.3 PCSDS produced information materials

ECAN Monitoring and Evaluation System

Monitoring the environment is an important part of sustainable development. It is a mechanism to determine whether RA 7611 and other mandated laws as applied in Palawan can attain its objectives of protecting the environment to ensure the continuous flow of ecosystem goods and services that are required of an efficient functioning economy for an equitable society. The PCSDS conducted environmental monitoring within the framework of Environmental Monitoring and Evaluation System (EMES) as stipulated in RA 7611. The PCSDS operated environmental laboratory which conducted 840 analyses of water samples. Under the Natural Capital Monitoring, two papers were drafted. One is the “Ecosystem Accounting for Palawan Flora, Fauna and Watershed Reserve” that highlights its importance in terms of wildlife habitat, improvement in water quality and climate regulating services, economic potential of its recreation service, and their policy implications. The other paper is a proposal for “Using Natural Capital Accounting to Support Sustainable Economic Development” which aims to monitor the natural assets that support the sub-sectors driving the economic growth of Palawan. Also accomplished were the sustainable development monitoring of major mining and agriculture economic industries and sectors in Palawan using international tools. For the agriculture industry the use of Sustainable Assessment of Food and Agriculture Systems (SAFA), and for the mining industry the application of Sustainable Management Tool. Using CIVICUS Civil Society Index, the staff gathered data for the sustainability and impact assessment of Civil Society Organizations in mainland Palawan. Finally, two sustainable development related technical papers were also drafted. The first paper entitled “Localization of SMOT Objectives with Philippine Laws and Standards”, which demonstrates the feasibility of adapting SMOT as a national policy to monitor the sustainability and compliance of mining operations in the country. The other paper is the “PCSDS Energy Management Plan”, which includes energy conservation measures and strategies consistent with the Government Energy Management Program (GEMP) and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EEC) Act.

The PCSDS has secured re-Certification of ISO 9001:2015 or the Quality Management System (QMS) in 2020 for delivering quality services to its clientele.

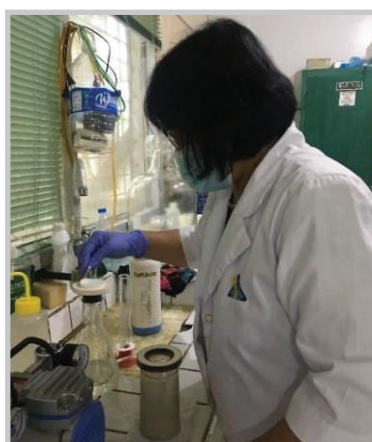


Figure 17.4 The PCSDS Environmental Laboratory

(Source: PCSDS)



Figure 17.5 PCSDS ISO 9001:2015 Re-Certification for 2020