

DENR Memorandum Circular
No. 17
May 13, 1993

SUBJECT : Guidelines on the Conduct of Protected Area Suitability Assessment (PASA)

Pursuant to Section 5 of RA 7586 (NIPAS Act) and Section 3 of DAO No. 25 Series of 1992 (NIPAS Implementing Rules and Regulations) and in order to provide guidelines in the conduct of a rapid assessment of the components of NIPAS the following is hereby promulgated for the guidance and compliance of all concerned.

Section 1. Objective - It shall be the purpose of this Circular to set forth in detail the procedure which the DENR will follow in the screening of the existing protected areas to determine their suitability or non-suitability for preservation as protected area and inclusion to the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) under any of the protected area categories provided in the Act.

Section 2. Scope - The Protected Area Suitability Assessment (PASA) shall cover all areas or islands designated as initial components of NIPAS as embodied in Section 5 of R.A. 7586. It shall involve the gathering, compilation and analysis of relevant information on the biophysical and socio-economic characteristics and other environmental features of the protected area.

Section 3. Significance - No existing protected area shall be recommended as either suitable or non-suitable for preservation as protected area without the accomplished PASA Form Nos. 1,2 and 3.

Section 4. Conduct of Protected Area Suitability Assessment - The conduct of PASA shall involve the following activities:

- a) **Secondary Data Collection** - All relevant secondary data such as maps (topographic, vegetative, landuse, geologic, etc.) census data, government assessment reports (national & local), meteorological data, demographic data, socio-economic profile and current development projects/programs, etc. shall be gathered from various sources such as DENR field offices, NAMRIA, PAGASA and other government offices, for compilation.
- b) **On-site Observation** - This shall involve the actual gathering of information/data within the selected study sites. All observed biophysical and socio-economic characteristics and other environmental features of the protected area shall be recorded using PASA Form No. 1. This activity shall include spot

mapping wherein important features/structures such as waterfalls, crater lakes, roads, houses, etc. shall be presented in a sketch map.

- c. **Interviews** - Local community officials of tenured migrants and leaders of indigenous cultural communities within the protected area, leaders of local communities adjacent to the protected area, concerned NGOs, and people's organizations shall serve as key informants. PASA Form No. 2 shall be used in the interview.

Section 5. Team Organization - A PASA Team shall be organized. It shall be multi-disciplinary consisting of not less than 5 members preferably a forester, biologist, geologist, sociologist and an engineer.

Section 6. Study Site Selection - Adequate number of study sites shall be selected for each protected area. The study site/s shall be representative of the protected area.

Section 7. Mapping - All information/data gathered such as the latest vegetative cover, land-use, elevation, geology, hydrology etc., shall be reflected on a final map using a base map. A scale of 1:50,000 shall be used for areas more than 500 hectares and 1:20,000 for areas less than 500 hectares.

Section 8. Data Organization and Analysis - The analysis of data gathered shall be made by the PASA Team considering the following:

- a. Determine whether the protected area is suitable or unsuitable for preservation as protected area for inclusion in NIPAS using Memorandum Circular No. __, referred to as "Criteria and Guidelines for the Categorization of the Initial Components of NIPAS".
- b. Recommend appropriate category of the protected area, if found suitable, based on the categories stipulated in Section 3 of RA 7586.
- c. Recommend other appropriate category or land-use classification if an area is found unsuitable for inclusion in the System so that it would fit to serve other priority programs which are of national interest.

PASA Form No. 3 shall be used in the final evaluation of the subject protected area.

Section 9. PASA Report

The PASA report for each protected area within the region shall be compiled by the Regional Office for submission to the Secretary through PAWB. Each PASA report shall be accompanied by accomplished PASA forms, including maps, photographs and other relevant data.

Section 10. Repealing Clause. This Circular supersedes all Department Orders, Circulars and/or Memoranda inconsistent herewith.

Section 11. Effectivity - This Circular shall take effect immediately.

ANGEL C. ALCALA
Secretary