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TECHNICAL BULLETIN
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SUBJECT   :   **CLARIFYING THE PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES IN THE CONDUCT OF PROTECTED AREA SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT (PASA)**

Pursuant to Section 5 of RA 7586 (NIPAS Act), as amended and Rule 6.6 of DENR Adm. Or. No. 2008-26 or the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of the NIPAS Act, the following guidelines is hereby promulgated to update and further clarify the process for the conduct of PASA as provided for in DENR Memorandum Circular No. 17, Series of 1992:

Section 1. Objective. This Technical Bulletin aims to clarify and further improve/enhance the process and activities necessary in the conduct of suitability assessment for protected areas. The PASA is a rapid screening and evaluation of proposed areas to determine their suitability for establishment as protected areas and inclusion in the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS).

The PASA shall also recommend the appropriate category of the proposed protected area as provided for in Section 3 of the NIPAS Act to serve as basis for its management.

Section 2. Scope and Coverage. All proposed areas whether terrestrial, wetland or marine ecosystems shall undergo PASA prior to the completion of other requirements for establishment as protected areas. Initial components of the NIPAS as provided in Section 5 of the NIPAS Act including new or additional areas recommended for establishment under the System shall undergo suitability assessment. The PASA shall likewise support the modification of boundaries or disestablishment of existing protected areas under the NIPAS.

Other areas for designation as conservation areas such as those established by Local Government Units (Local Conservation Areas) may undergo suitability assessment following the procedure herein provided.

Section 3. Significance. Proposed protected areas shall only be recommended for establishment after the conduct of PASA. The PASA Report shall form part of the supporting documents for the establishment or disestablishment of the protected area by the President and by Congress.

Section 4. Conduct of Protected Area Suitability Assessment. The PASA shall consist of the gathering, compilation and analysis of relevant information on the biophysical, socio-cultural and economic characteristics as well as other environmental features of the proposed protected area. As such, the conduct of PASA shall involve the following activities:

United Nations **Decade on Biodiversity**

4.1. ***Secondary Data Collection*** – All relevant secondary data or information such as maps (topographic, soil, drainage, vegetative, land-use, geologic, climate, geo-hazard etc.), demographic, meteorological, bio-physical, socio-economic profile, and current development projects/programs, among others, shall be gathered and compiled from various sources. Historical data more particularly on the bio-physical resources of the area must be considered. Secondary information from the last ten years reckoned from the time of the actual PASA should be used as important sources of information. Such secondary information shall be compiled and submitted as references of the PASA Report.

4.2. ***On-site Observation*** – This will involve the actual gathering of information within the selected study sites. Primary data shall be collected in each of ecosystem types identified within the proposed protected area. All observed bio-physical, socio-cultural and economic characteristics and other environmental features of the proposed protected area shall be recorded. This activity shall include spot mapping wherein important features/characteristics such as waterfalls, crater, lakes and structures such as roads, houses, light houses, communication facilities, etc., shall be recorded and their relative location shall be presented in a map. Photo-documentation and geo-tagging of important features shall be undertaken and submitted as part of the PASA Report.

All information generated from the actual site observation shall be recorded using PASA Form No. 1.

4.3 ***Key Informant Interviews*** – Officials of local government units or local communities and leaders of indigenous peoples, if any, within and adjacent to the proposed protected area as well as concerned NGOs and People's Organizations shall serve as key informants. Important discussions such as insights or perceptions, issues and concerns raised by the informants on the proposed protected area should be noted and information provided shall be documented.

PASA Form No. 2 shall be used in the interview.

Section 5. PASA Team Organization. The DENR Regional Office shall organize a multi-disciplinary Team to undertake the PASA. The members of the Team shall preferably have a background on natural sciences, social sciences and other relevant fields of specialization. The DENR may tap the assistance of the academe, NGOs concerned LGUs, and community representatives in the conduct of PASA. The Team should ensure equal participation of men and women.

Section 6. Study Site Selection. Study sites shall cover the various ecosystem types within the proposed protected area. Study sites to be selected must ensure that they represent the various important bio-physical, socio-cultural and economic features of the proposed protected area. The study sites should be geo-tagged and indicated in a map to show their relative location for future references.

Section 7. Mapping. All information/data gathered such as the latest vegetative cover, land-use, elevation, geology, hydrology/river systems, geo-hazard areas, settlements, etc., shall be reflected on a final map of the proposed protected area. 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 data gathered by the PASA Team shall be analyzed considering the following:

a.   Whether the protected area is suitable or unsuitable for establishment as protected area under NIPAS.

b.   Appropriate category of the protected area, if found suitable, based on the categories stipulated in Section 3 of RA 7586 and Rule 4 of the Revised IRR of the NIPAS Act.

c.   Other appropriate land classification, e.g., /forestland or A and D land, if an area is found unsuitable for inclusion in the System to serve other priority programs of national interest/significance.

Section 9. Suitability. Suitability for establishment as protected area shall be determined based on the information generated from PASA Forms 1 and 2 including the analysis. PASA Form 3 provides the basis for rating the proposed protected area. If the proposed area will not qualify for establishment as protected area, the appropriate land use or land classification shall be recommended.

Section 10. Determination of Category. If the proposed area qualifies for establishment as a protected area, the appropriate category shall be based on the results indicated in Annex A. Provided that, any modification or change of category of protected area shall be done pursuant to Section 9 hereof. Provided further that, such modification or change shall be made through an amendment of the Presidential Proclamation or legislation establishing the protected area, as the case may be.

Section 11. Reporting. The PASA Report for each protected area shall be reviewed and finalized by the Regional Office for submission to the Secretary through the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB).

The PASA Report shall include the perception or attitude of the local and indigenous communities towards the proposed establishment of the protected area, and existing and potential threats whether natural or man-made. The Report shall be supported by accomplished PASA forms, including maps, photographs, and other relevant data. The list of references used shall also be attached.

All incomplete PASA Reports previously submitted to then PAWB (BMB) shall be updated based on the procedures under this Technical Bulletin.

Section 12. Effectivity. This Technical Bulletin shall take effect immediately and shall be circulated for the information and guidance of all concerned.

THERESA MUNDITA S. LIM
Director

PASA FORM No. 1

PROTECTED AREA SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT (PASA)
(ON SITE OBSERVATION)

Name of Proposed Protected Area:

_____

Location of Study Site/s: _____

Study Site No.:

_____

Date of Assessment/s:

_____

General Instruction: Please describe all relevant information and indicate such information in a map, if possible, together with geo-tagged photos.

1. General Information

    1.1 Geographic location and accessibility

    1.2 Geographic features such as elevation, terrain, slope

    1.3 Climatic conditions to include current and projected climate, monthly and annual averages of rainfall and temperature, extreme rains and temperatures, droughts, typhoons, etc.

    1.4 Vulnerability of ecosystems and communities to both natural and man-made disasters (location of risk/disaster prone areas – typhoons, extreme rains/temperatures, floods, landslides, droughts, fault lines, volcanic eruptions, habitats of vulnerable species)

    1.5 Current and projected land uses in areas within and adjacent to the proposed protected area indicating their location and extent; major drivers of land use/land cover change; development programs (e.g. infrastructure/road construction/rehabilitation, dam, geothermal, port/pier, etc.)

    1.6 Socio-cultural Profile including demography (sex-disaggregated data on population trend and projection, in-migration and out-migration, drivers of population growth), stakeholders, ethnography, indigenous knowledge and practices

    1.7 Economic Profile to include major economic activities, income sources and types of livelihood, natural resource-use profile, etc., of men and women.

1.8 Potential for ecotourism/tourism. Describe profile of visitors, activities they engage within the proposed protected area and classify visitors whether local or foreign (include sex-disaggregated data).

2. Bio-physical Features:

   2.1 Geological – description of rock formations, springs, volcanic craters, sand dunes, coral reefs, deep valleys, river channels, waterfalls, beaches, coasts, coves, bays, islands, caves, cliffs, lakes, ponds,

   2.2 Hydrologic – description of river system, lakes, surface water sources, water uses, groundwater, etc.

   2.3 Vegetative cover, ecosystem and habitat types specifying as well extent to which those areas have been protected from or have not been subject to human induced change

   2.4 Land-uses including natural and man-made disturbances, drivers of major land use/land cover change

   2.5 Important flora and fauna noting those of special interest, value, and conservation status (critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable)

   2.6 Important feeding, nesting, rest area, and/or breeding sites of animals

   2.7 Other relevant information as may be available

3. Socio-Cultural Features

   3.1 Indicate socio-cultural features specifying if any, name of the group, approximate population and area occupied.

   3.2. Description of cultural practices, beliefs and traditions with emphasis on the use of natural resources.

   3.3 Existing land-use patterns within or adjacent to the proposed protected area, indicating location and extent.

Land Uses	Location	Approx. Area (Ha)
Agricultural		
Commercial		
Residential		
Infrastructure		
Industrial		
Others (specify)		

   3.4 Social services, e.g., hospitals/health centers, schools, local government centers, police station, fire station, military detachments, telecommunication facilities, etc.

4. Institutional Features

    4.1 Stakeholder activities or projects within or adjacent to the protected area (POs, NGOs, LGUs, academe, etc.)

5. Economic Features

    5.1 Distribution of economic activities (e.g. agriculture, forestry and fishing, construction, other services activities, etc.) within or adjacent to the protected area.

Prepared by:

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Team Members

Attested by:

_____
CENRO/PENRO

PASA FORM No. 2

PROTECTED AREA SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT (PASA)
(KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Name of Proposed Protected Area : _____

Name of Interview (Optional) : _____

Address of Key Informant (Brgy., Mun., Prov., Reg.) : _____

_____

Date of Interview :

_____

The following are the guide questions for the Interviews. Follow-up questions may be asked by the interviewers to elucidate responses from the Key Informants.

1.   Natural Features

1.1   What are the geological features in the proposed protected area (e.g., rock formations, springs, volcanic craters, sand dunes, coral reefs, deep valleys, river channels, waterfalls, beaches, coasts, coves, bays, islands, caves, cliffs, lakes, ponds, etc.)?

1.2   How are these natural features used and recognized by communities (local and indigenous peoples)? by local government units? by other agencies?

1.3   What are the threats to these natural features? Are there interventions to these threats? What are these interventions? by whom?

2.   Biological Features

2.1   What are the major or dominant species of wild flora observed by the key informants in the proposed protected area? What are their importance to the KI?

2.2   What are the major or dominant species of wild fauna observed by the key informants in the proposed protected area? What are their importance to the KI?

2.3   Are there important feeding, nesting, resting, or breeding sites in the proposed protected area? Where are these located? What are the threats and interventions made to these sites and by whom?

3.   Socio-Cultural and Economic Features

   3.1   Are there local communities in the proposed protected area? Where are the local communities located relative to the proposed protected areas? What are their traditional practices in the area? What are their sources of livelihood?

   3.2   Are there indigenous people present in the proposed area? What ethnic groups do they belong? Where are they located relative to the proposed protected areas? What are their traditional practices in the area (location of burial grounds, sacred areas, hunting grounds)? What are their sources of livelihood?

   3.3   What is the governance mechanism observed by the communities and indigenous peoples in the proposed area?

   3.4   What are the perceived threats of the proposed protected area to the local communities? to the indigenous people?

   3.5   What are the issues and concerns/problems encountered by the local communities and indigenous in the proposed protected area?

4.   Economic Development Features (*may be applicable only to KI from local government units and other local offices of other national government agencies, academe and other relevant institutions*).

   4.1   What are the current and future development plans and programs within the proposed protected area? Provide details on the type of development activities and area of coverage.

PASA FORM No. 3

PROTECTED AREA SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT (PASA)
(SUMMARY SHEET)

Name of Proposed Protected Area: _____

Date of Assessment: _____

CRITERIA	PARAMETERS	WEIGHT (%)	ACTUAL RATING (%)	REMARKS
IRREPLACEABILITY: Presence of restricted range and congregatory species		30		
VULNERABILITY: Presence of globally threatened species	indicate what are the globally threatened species	25		
SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE: Value of area in terms of recreational, educational, traditional use, heritage, and other sustainable uses.	ecosystems services: 1.ecotourism/recreational value (4%), 2. water(4%), 3. carbon(4%), 4. heritage/traditional (4%), and 5. hazard mitigation(4%)	20		
NATURALNESS: Intact natural cover such as forest, mangroves, seagrass beds and corals.	% of area coverage; condition	10		
UNIQUENESS: Presence of important cultural, geological and aesthetic features that support biodiversity.		10		
ABUNDANCE: High concentration of species of flora and fauna in the site.		5		

Accomplished By: _____   Team Members:

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Attested By:

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                CENRO/PENRO

Concurred By:

_____
           DENR Regional Director

CATEGORY	CRITERIA						SALIENT FEATURES
	Naturalness	Abundance	Uniqueness	Vulnerability	Irreplaceability	Socio-Economic Importance	
Strict Nature Reserve	/	/	/	/	/	/	Undisturbed state
Natural Park	/	/	/	/	/	/	Relatively large area capable of sustaining ecological processes and ecosystem services (e.g. nature recreation, water production, carbon sequestration, hazard mitigation)
Wildlife Sanctuary	/			/	/		Habitat of species or group of species of priority management concerns
Natural Monument			/				Relatively small area with unique cultural or geologic value
Natural Biotic Area			/			/	Presence of IPs and other local communities living in harmony with their environment practicing their culture and traditions
Protected Landscape and/or Seascape	/					/	Harmonious interaction of human and nature