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**SUBJECT : GUIDELINES ON ESTABLISHING AND MANAGING MARINE
PROTECTED AREAS**

Pursuant to Section 9 of DENR Administrative Order No. 2016-26 on the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP), the attached "Guidelines on Establishing and Managing Marine Protected Areas" is hereby disseminated in support of MPA Network Establishment and Strengthening Component of CMEMP.

This Technical Bulletin is circulated for the information and guidance of all concerned.

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GUIDELINES ON ESTABLISHING AND MANAGING MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 7586 otherwise known as the "National Integrated Protected Areas System" Law and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) and other pertinent laws and consistent with Executive Order No. 533, Series of 2006 entitled "Adopting the Integrated Coastal Management Strategy to Ensure the Sustainable Development of the Country's Coastal and Marine Environment and Resources and Establishing Supporting Mechanisms", this Technical Bulletin prescribes the general considerations for establishing and managing marine protected areas (MPAs).

The Guidelines aims to provide the DENR Regional Offices concerned, including field implementers and site managers, and interested Local Government Units (LGUs) the procedure on establishing and managing MPAs.

This Technical Bulletin will apply nationwide in coastal and marine areas identified as potential MPAs under the jurisdiction of national and/or local governments.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

I. Definition of Terms. For the purposes of this Guidelines, the following definition of terms shall apply:

Coastal area/zone - is a band of dry land and adjacent ocean space (water and submerged land) in which terrestrial processes and uses directly affect oceanic processes and uses, and vice versa; its geographic extent may include areas within a landmark limit of one (1) kilometer from the shoreline at high tide to include mangrove swamps, brackish water ponds, nipa swamps, estuarine rivers, sandy beaches and other areas within a seaward limit of 200 meters isobath to include coral reefs, algal flats, seagrass beds and other soft-bottom areas. (RA 8550)

Marine area/zone - is a generic term for the sea or those waters that are saline and affected by tidal processes.

Marine Protected Area (MPA) - a defined area of the sea established and set aside by law, administrative regulation, or any other effective means in order to conserve and protect a part of or the entire enclosed environment through the establishment of management guidelines. It is considered a generic term that includes all declared areas governed by specific rules or guidelines in order to protect and manage activities within the enclosed area. For the purpose of this Guidelines, MPA shall refer to the following NIPAS categories:

- A. Protected Landscape and Seascape
- B. Protected Seascape
- C. Natural Park
- D. Wildlife Sanctuary
- E. Natural Monument

II. Establishment of Marine Protected Areas.

A. MPAs to be proposed under NIPAS

1. **Criteria.** MPA site selection can be based on the following set of criteria:

- a. **Biogeographic criteria** - presence of rare biogeographic qualities or representative of a biogeographic "type" or types; existence of unique or unusual geological features
- b. **Ecological criteria** - ecological processes or life-support systems (e.g. as a source for larvae for downstream areas); integrity, or the degree to which the area, either alone or in association with other protected areas, encompasses a complete ecosystem; variety of habitats; presence of habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species; serves as nursery ground or areas required to complete the life cycle of a species or group of species; presence of feeding, breeding or rest areas; existence of rare or unique habitat for any species; and degree of genetic diversity within species
- c. **Naturalness** - extent to which the area has been protected from, or has not been subject to, human-induced change
- d. **Economic importance** - existing or potential economic contribution due to protection (e.g. protection of an area for recreation, subsistence, use by traditional inhabitants, appreciation by tourists and others, or as a refuge nursery area or source of economically important species)
- e. **Social importance** - existing or potential value to local, national or international communities because of its heritage, historical, cultural, traditional, aesthetic, educational or recreational qualities
- f. **Scientific importance** - value for research and monitoring
- g. **International or national significance** - existence of any national or international designation; potential for listing on a national or international system
- h. **Practicality or feasibility** - degree of insulation from external destructive influences; social and political acceptability, degree of community support; accessibility for education, tourism, recreation; compatibility with existing uses, particularly by locals; ease of management or compatibility with existing management regimes

Other references which may be used in selecting sites for MPAs include the criteria for designating Critical Habitats, Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Ecologically and Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) as attached in this Guidelines as Annex I, II and III, respectively. Existing areas designated as any of the above may be considered as priority sites in designating MPAs.

2. **Procedure.** The establishment of MPAs under NIPAS shall follow the NIPAS Framework and shall undertake the following activities stipulated in Section 6.6 of DAO 2008-26, enumerated below:
 - a. Preparation and Compilation of Maps with Technical Description of Boundaries
 - b. Public Notification
 - c. Protected Area Suitability Assessment (PASA)
 - d. Public Consultation
 - e. Preparation of Initial Protected Area Plan (IPAP)
 - f. Public Hearing
 - g. Regional Review and Recommendation
 - h. National Review and Recommendation
 - i. Presidential Proclamation
 - j. Congressional Action
3. **Management Zones.** Determination of specific management zones will be based on scientific assessment and community consensus and should be part of the protected area management planning. Strict protection zones are also referred to as the core zone in fish sanctuary or marine reserve or marine refugia, and in other MPAs within NIPAS.

B. Locally-managed MPAs (outside NIPAS areas) – In support to RA No. 8550 as amended by RA No. 10654 (Revised Fisheries Code) and RA No. 7160 (Local Government Code), establishment of MPAs outside NIPAS is likewise encouraged. MPA establishment is considered a priority best practice on coastal and marine area management of the LGUs.

The Philippine Coastal Management Guidebook Series No. 5 on Managing Coastal Habitats and Marine Protected Areas can be used as reference of the Regional/Field Offices in providing technical assistance to the LGUs on establishing and managing MPAs.

III. Management of MPAs. In order to make MPAs responsive and effective and to ensure its success and sustainability, the following management strategies shall be considered:

A. General Strategies

1. **Management Board/Body.** A Protected Area Management Board shall govern protected areas under NIPAS. LGU-initiated MPAs outside NIPAS shall also create a similar multi-sectoral MPA Management Body.
2. **Management Plan.** A general management plan shall be developed for NIPAS areas which shall serve as a guide in formulating individual plans for each MPAs inside the NIPAS area. The Management Body of MPAs outside NIPAS shall formulate the same for their respective MPAs.

A good management plan of MPAs whether inside or outside NIPAS areas considers involvement of indigenous people and gender development, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, business and financial plan (for

sustainability) as well as, mainstreaming of the principles of ICM, EAFM, and MPA management best practices in the Plan. Modification and refinement of MPA Management Plan, usually done every five years, is necessary based on new knowledge and experience, and results of the monitoring and evaluation.

3. **Boundary Delineation/Demarcation.** The management board/body shall facilitate ground delineation and demarcation of the boundaries of the protected area and the management zones.
4. **Funding.** Funds for protected area under NIPAS shall come from their respective Integrated Protected Area Fund (IPAF), General Appropriations Act (GAA) funding, or other sources. For those outside the System, LGUs shall regularly allocate fund for their MPAs through the approval and adoption of their respective MPA Management Plans.
5. **Rehabilitation activities.** Where needed and applicable, rehabilitation activities shall be done on damaged and disturbed coastal and marine areas, either by protection or with the aid of existing rehabilitation technologies/methods grounded on scientific researches.

B. Cross-cutting Strategies

1. Capacity-Building
2. Protection and Law Enforcement
3. Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Campaigns
4. Partnership Building
5. Sustainable Ecotourism/Bio-friendly Livelihood Interventions

IV. Monitoring and Evaluation. Monitoring of MPAs must be done at regular intervals to provide feedback on the management effectiveness and allow for adaptive management process to fine tune the conduct of managing the MPA. It is important to decide on a set of metric indicators based on the management objectives agreed. Tools, such as MPA Management Effectiveness Assessment Tool (MEAT), MPA Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), and/or ICM Level of Implementation, will be administered at each MPA once every two to three years to determine the effectiveness of the management process and to determine future directions.

V. Reporting. DENR Offices concerned shall facilitate the submission of the status of their NIPAS/MPAs bi-annual a year, as well as the reports/updates on the implementation of activities. They shall also facilitate consolidation of reports from LGU-initiated MPAs outside NIPAS as well as encourage participation of these MPAs/LGUs to MPA Awards and Recognition as a way of reporting, databasing, and incentive mechanism.

VI. References. DENR Offices concerned may consult available technical references and information materials particularly in assessing the physical, biological, chemical and geological aspects of the MPAs, as well as, legal instruments particularly for areas with international and national interests.