



REDISCOVERING **The Heart of the Philippines**

MUNICIPAL TOURISM, CULTURE, AND ARTS
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (2022-2025)



**SANTA CRUZ
MARINDUQUE**

REDISCOVER THE LOCAL



PAGE 3

FROM THE MUNICIPAL MAYOR

PAGE 4

ABOUT SANTA CRUZ

PAGE 8

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

PAGE 10

CREATIVE INDUSTRY ROADMAP

PAGE 20

*SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM
ROADMAP*

CONTENTS



FROM OUR MUNICIPAL MAYOR

I Love Santa Cruz - with this campaign, the Municipal government of Santa Cruz, Marinduque hopes to promote broader awareness of the unique geographic location of our beloved town within the very heart of the Philippine islands while at the same time deepening local appreciation of the beauty, resources, and relationships that underpin the town's tourism, culture, and arts. It is my fervent hope that through this strategic plan, we may be able to realize a life-sustaining tourism industry with the support of all stakeholders and partners.

I Love Santa Cruz is also an invitation to **REDISCOVER THE LOCAL**, that is, to explore new opportunities and present new encounters that can enhance the competitiveness of the town's tourism industry.



To our future partners, we are excited to welcome you to Santa Cruz, Marinduque - the heart of the Philippines.

To our local stakeholders, let us give our dear tourists the best of the Santa Cruz experience!

MARISA RED MARTINEZ

THE TOWN

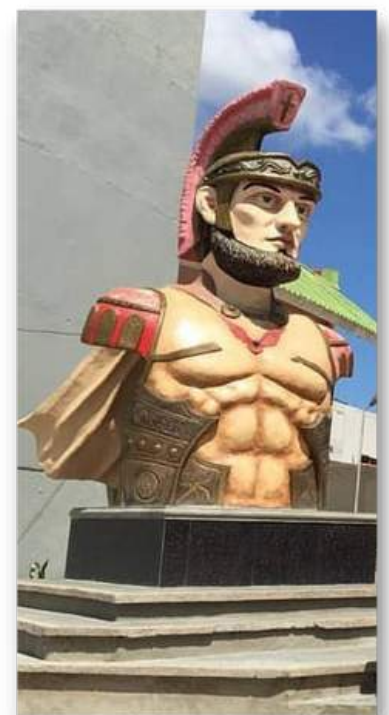
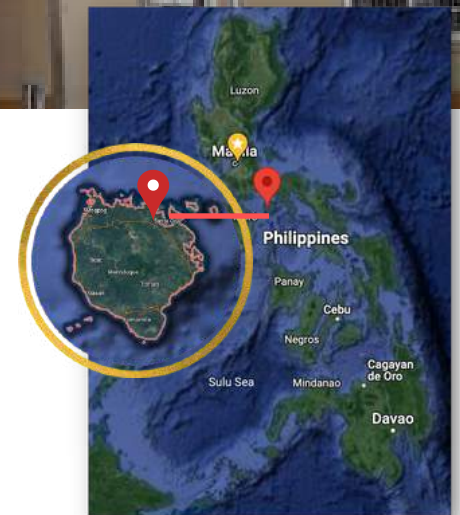


The Municipality of Santa Cruz is a first-class municipality, the most populous, and the largest in land area in the Province of Marinduque - an island province in Southern Luzon.

Comprising 55 barangays (villages) including three island barangays, Santa Cruz is blessed with largely unspoiled natural ecosystems, lending to its people and visitors, pristine white-sand beaches and sandbars, caves and mountain views.

With more than half of the town's land area situated along coastlines, fishing and other marine-based activities are primary sources of livelihood. Fruit bearing coconut trees abound throughout the town's rugged terrain and are also a source of local income.

Downtown Santa Cruz is composed of five peri-urban villages and is the center of the town's commercial, financial, and trade activities.





Through the last decade, the natural treasures of Santa Cruz have grown in popularity and have seen increased tourist arrivals. The most well-known and with well-established and regularly organized commercial tourist packages include:

PALAD SANDBAR
Barangay Maniwaya

HAKUPAN ISLET
Barangay Botilao

ROCK FORMATION
Barangay Mongpong

BAGUMBUNGAN CAVE
Barangay San Isidro

KAWA-KAWA SPRING/FALLS
Barangay Bangcuangan

MORIONES LENTEN RITES

While the scenic natural destinations of the municipality draw thousands of vacationers especially during the summer season, the town's cultural heritage which it shares with the entire province of Marinduque is its primary tourism identity.

Inspired by the Biblical narrative of the conversion of the Roman soldier who pierced the side of the crucified Christian Messiah, **the Moriones tradition involves the wearing of a wooden, carved, and painted mask of Roman soldiers and their roaming the town streets during the Catholic Holy Week** in search of their converted peer named Longinus in Christian lore.

SCHOLARS TRACED THE EMERGENCE OF THE MORIONES MASK WEARING PRACTICE TO THE CATECHETICAL INNOVATIONS OF A PRIEST DURING THE SPANISH OCCUPATION WHO USED IT TO DRAW LOCALS INTO THE LENTEN AND EASTER LITURGIES.

SIMILAR PRACTICES HAVE ALSO EXISTED IN SPAIN PARTICULARLY IN VALENCIA - THE SEAT OF THE MOROS Y CRISTIANOS FESTIVALS COMMEMORATING THE SPANISH RECONQUISTA.

Over the decades, the Moriones mask and costume wearing tradition has developed more cutting edge and modern designs while remaining true to the basic elements of the practice.

In Santa Cruz, Marinduque, local government staff accentuate the Lenten celebrations by wearing ancient Hebrew attires referred to by locals as *Samaritano*.



The Moriones cultural heritage makes the Christian Easter celebrations in Santa Cruz and the entire province of Marinduque much more intense than it already is in other parts of largely Catholic Philippines.

But while the annually-staged **Senakulo** or Lenten Passion Play is the centerpiece of the town's community-driven cultural and creative performances, other activities have also been developed over the years to complement the main event.

This includes the provincial government's **Battle of the Morions** cultural show performance, the municipality's **Moriones Street Parade**, and the **Holy Thursday Bible Parade** of municipal employees and other local government officials and personnel.

These are cultural, creative, and tourist attracting spaces that are continuously evolving and are being articulated by a community reflecting on contemporary trends and practices.





DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The tourism development strategy of Santa Cruz for the next three to nine years will leverage its unique cultural heritage - the Moriones - to become the town's anchor in stimulating local tourist enterprises that will maximize livelihood-generating opportunities from tourist activities.

Local government initiatives will be deployed across four development pillars with two key foundational sectors: Creative Industries and Sustainable Eco-Tourism.

DEVELOPMENT PILLARS

SPATIAL DESIGN

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

DIGITALIZATION

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

SUSTAINABLE ECO-TOURISM

BLUEPRINT FOR DEVELOPMENT

BY 2025, SANTA CRUZ IS

AN EMERGING HUB FOR CROSS-CULTURAL,
MULTI-ECOSYSTEM EXPERIENTIAL AND
EDUCATIONAL TOURISM

Grow tourist expenditures on community-developed and
marketed creative, artistic, and knowledge products

OUR GROWTH MARKETS

PROVINCIAL AND
REGIONAL TOURISTS

VACATIONING
OVERSEAS FILIPINOS

BACKPACKERS
NICHE M.I.C.E.

CREATING PLATFORMS OF CULTURAL ENCOUNTER

FESTIVALS
AND EVENTS

MONUMENTS AND
LANDMARKS

PERFORMANCES
AND EXHIBITIONS

TRAILS AND
TOURS

ACTIVATING COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES

FOOD AND
DRINK

DESIGN AND
FABRICATION

PERFORMERS
AND ARTISTS

SERVICE AND
HOSPITALITY

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLABORATIONS

SKILLS BUILDING
AND ENHANCEMENT

RESEARCH AND
KNOWLEDGE
TRANSFER AND
CIRCULATION

MARKETING AND
PROMOTIONS

SANTA CRUZ TOWN

CREATIVE INDUSTRY





The Moriones cultural heritage being primarily, a community performance, the local government envisions a **coordinated effort among local residents, artists, and creative organizations or enterprises** in enabling a local culture-driven creative economy that will **provide support for the performative and spatial dimensions of the Moriones tradition.**

To realize this, the local government will support the organizational and continuing capacity development of the sectors whose creative outputs can feed into the staging of Moriones-related activities.

Actors, Singers,
Dancers, and
Cultural Performers

Crafts Designers,
Fabricators, and
Costume Makers

Visual Artists,
Photography, Film,
and Digital Arts



ENHANCING PERFORMERS SKILLS AND ENABLING EXPOSURE PLATFORMS

With the Moriones Lenten Passion Play as the centerpiece of the municipality's cultural activities, the local government will invest in enhancing its over-all performance and staging through the capacity building of the volunteer actors and their **organization into a formal community theater company.**

Complementing the Moriones tradition is another cultural gem unique to the people of Marinduque and Santa Cruz - the **PUTONG WELCOMING CEREMONY** - a festive dance culminating in the "crowning" ("putong") of tourists, guests, and visitors to Marinduque which the local government will mainstream especially among young people.



INTEGRATING CREATIVE NETWORKS INTO MUNICIPAL FACILITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Craftsmanship is a widely available and continuously developed skill among the people of Santa Cruz. Organized groups as well as small and medium enterprises fabricate **motorized water vessels, woodworks, and tourist merchandise** which the local government seeks to bring together into standardized world-class quality and integrate into the spatial and facility development as well as infrastructure projects of the municipality.



EMPOWERING LOCAL YOUTH AS CREATIVE INDUSTRY LEADERS

Young people in Santa Cruz are eager to get their hands dirty in projects that allow them to express their skills and talents.

Through competitions, grants, and collaborative initiatives, the local government is investing on the necessary supplies, materials, as well as further training that will further cultivate local talents, bridge gaps in skills, and link creative production with market demands and opportunities.

SPATIAL DESIGN

- **Town Plaza Rehabilitation** to establish a unifying look and create a space that reinforces the Romanesque backdrop for enabling the Moryon as a central tourism and arts motif
- **Roman Ruins Inspired Beach Camp Development** to serve as a hub for an immersive cross-cultural and transhistorical tourism experience
- **Open-Air Amphitheater Rehabilitation** to provide a conducive space for performances, exhibitions, and creative initiatives

DEVELOPMENT

TALENT

- **Trainings and Workshops** to enhance skills and develop potentials of organized artists collectives, clubs, and associations
- **Competitions, Contests, and Grants** to incentivize talent sharing and development and to serve as a platform for scouting new talents and promoting interest in priority creative sectors
- **Financial and Technical Assistance** to strengthen organizational capabilities and provide supplies, materials, and other implements needed for creative production

SHARING

KNOWLEDGE

- **Academic Conferences, Symposia, and Workshops** to transmit research and development outputs to artists and their networks
- **Publication of Learning Materials** to continuously upgrade existing knowledge sets and document best practices
- **Exhibitions and Fairs** to provide a venue for showcasing community outputs and link creatives suppliers to local and external markets

DIGITALIZATION

- **Creative Rural Future** website and social media branding and promotional initiatives to document ongoing and completed creative endeavors in Santa Cruz
- **Creatives Online Marketplace** to provide a platform for sales and drive engagement with local creative producers



Spatial Design

TOWN PLAZA REHABILITATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF MUNICIPAL TOURISM OFFICE

As the site of a broad range of community activities and celebrations, the Santa Cruz Town Plaza is the center of the locality's cultural identity. With the currently standing Morion monument - erected in 2015 by former mayor Wilfredo Red - proving to boost the town's identity across many tourist photos, the local government will pursue the full redevelopment of the plaza to reinforce the Moriones motif and inspire local

creativity through the mood and atmosphere animated by the public space.





Spatial Design

ROMAN RUINS-INSPIRED BEACH CAMP IN DAPDAP BEACH, BARANGAY TAGUM

A Roman ruins themed tourist destination to showcase the historical milieu including the day-to-day life of ancient Roman society to better appreciate the backdrop of the Moriones tradition while providing tourist-related activities, the **MORION CAMP AT DAPDAP BEACH** is envisioned to provide immersive cross-cultural and historical tourist experience.



- Accommodations
- Food Service
- Souvenir Shop
- Costume Rentals
- Activity Center





Spatial Design

ROMAN-RUINS THEMED OPEN AIR AMPHITHEATER AT THE MORION PLACE, BARANGAY MANLIBUNAN

The Morion Place is a municipal property currently in need of rehabilitation and will be transformed into the envisioned permanent space for staging the annual Passion Play and other cultural activities promoting local arts and tourism.



A
M
A
R
E

**SANTA CRUZ
CREATIVE
FUTURES
WEEK 2023**

**Arts from
the Heart**

February 10-17, 2023

Talent Development | Knowledge Sharing

To further enhance the talents and skills of local residents and showcase capabilities of existing organizations and creatives sectors, the local government will organize an Annual Creatives Festival coinciding with the local celebrations of Valentine's Day. This will also serve as the launching of the 2023 Moriones Lenten Rites Promotional Campaign.

FEB 10
Opening of
Visual Arts Fair

Start of Costume
Making Contest

Lecture Series
on Roman,
Spanish, and
Jewish Culture

FEB 11
Visual Arts
Workshops and
Lectures

Photography
Workshop

Combat Sports
Workshop

FEB 12
Digital Content
Creation
Workshop

Make-Up
Workshop

Flower
Arrangement
Workshop

FEB 13
Dance Workshop

Crafts and
Souvenirs
Workshop

Drag Performance
Workshop and
Training for
LGBTQ+

FEB 14
AMARE GALA
COSTUME
BALL

Fashion Show of
Designers in
Santa Cruz

FEB 15
Literary Arts
Workshop

Poetry
Story Writing
Features Writing

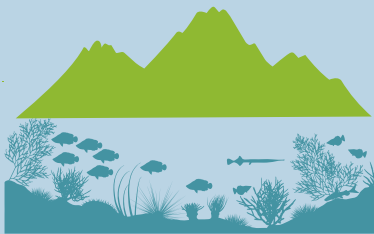
FEB 16
Culinary Arts
Workshop

Mini-Master
Chef
Competition

FEB 17
VARIETY
SHOW AND
AWARDING OF
WINNERS OF
VARIOUS
CONTESTS

ECOTOURISM TRAILS





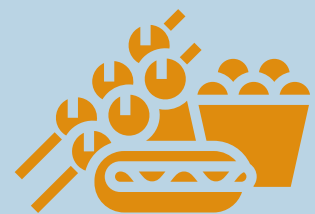
RIDGE TO REEF DESTINATIONS

To protect the local tourism patrimony and conserve the natural ecosystems of top tourist destinations, the local government will systematize registrations, accreditations, and monitoring of tourist arrivals while installing the needed facilities to secure both social and environmental stakes



FARM-TO-TABLE CULINARY SERVICES

To integrate local agricultural production across farms, aquaculture, and marine resources, the local government will establish linkages between local food establishments and resorts and farmers/fisherfolk organizations while promoting among tourists local culinary offerings.



STREET FOODS AND SOUVENIRS

To integrate local agricultural production across farms, aquaculture, and marine resources, the local government will establish linkages between local food establishments and resorts and farmers/fisherfolk organizations while promoting among tourists local culinary offerings.





STRENGTHENING THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT OF MUNICIPAL TOURISM ASSETS

REGULATING TOURIST BOATS DOCKING IN PALAD SANDBAR, MONGPONG ROCK FORMATION, AND HAKUPAN ISLET

- All boats (bancas) transporting tourists to these islands should register with the local government
- Only boats (bancas) bearing the license plate issued by the Municipality of Santa Cruz will be allowed to dock in these islets, those without licenses shall be asked to pay a surcharge

ESTABLISHING A CENTRAL DOCKING STATION FOR TOURIST BOATS IN MANIWAYA ISLAND

- Upon the completion of the Maniwaya Island circumferential road, bancas transporting tourists into and out of the island shall only be allowed to do so from a central docking station; this includes private boats owned by resorts in the island

SUPPORT FOR THE REGISTRATION OF LOCAL FISHING VESSELS FOR TOURIST USE AND PURPOSES

- The local government will endeavor to provide subsidies to local banca owners and operators and their respective associations for the registration of water-borne vessels that will be utilized for tourist transport within the municipality's waters

ENABLING PLATFORMS FOR COLLABORATION IN PROMOTING AGRI/CULINARY TOURISM

With multiple existing agri-fishery livelihood sources and potentials in Santa Cruz, opportunities abound for deepening linkages between agricultural producers and commercial as well as small-scale tourist services. By providing avenues for local agricultural producers to market their products to tourist service providers, the local government hopes to stimulate fruitful livelihood-generating collaborations.



INCENTIVIZING COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

The local government will institute an incentives regime for existing and new private investments that will cultivate sustained supply-chain relations with local, especially, community-based agricultural production farms.

ENHANCING LOCAL CULINARY CAPACITIES

To develop culinary offerings and elevate the existing local food industry to match market demand and preferences, the local government will rollout regular training programs while recognizing local best practices.

STREETFOOD AND TOURIST SOUVENIRS (*PASALUBONG*)

As in most Philippine rural areas, Santa Cruz boasts its own unique versions of traditional Filipino delicacies (ricecakes, coconut-milked infused desserts and other baked goods) - with **arrowroot** - cookies made of locally grown cassava.

Across the downtown's streets, ambulant vendors, including small eateries (*carinderias*) entice local residents and visitors with their home-cooked offerings and help in augmenting household incomes.

Recognizing the unique and at times, heirloom traditions that go into making these goodies and at the same time the creativity of local culinary creators, the local government will endeavor to standardize underlying safety, health, and nutritional processes involved in local delicacy making while providing marketing, branding, and promotional support for regulatory-compliant enterprises.



SANTA CRUZ SUSTAINABLE AND INTEGRATED ECO- TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

SPATIAL DESIGN

- **I Love Santa Cruz - Heart of the Philippines Mountainside View Deck** construction in Barangay Makulapnit overlooking the municipality's terrain from atop a mountain side
- **Santa Cruz Convention Center** with stalls and shops for local enterprises and small businesses
- **Tourist Service Facilities Development** in Barangays Botilao, Maniwaya, and Mongpong for convenient docking and transfers

DEVELOPMENT

TALENT

- **Trainings and Workshops** to enhance hospitality and tourist service skills for commercial and community tourism initiatives
- **Competitions, Contests, and Grants** to align local enterprises with the municipality's tourism branding, standards, and regulations
- **Financial and Technical Assistance** to strengthen organizational capabilities and provide supplies, materials, and other implements needed for eco-tourism promotion

SHARING

KNOWLEDGE

- **Academic Conferences, Symposia, and Workshops** to transmit research and development outputs on sustainable development, particularly the localization of the UN SDGs in tourism activities
- **Participation in National and Regional Exhibitions and Fairs** to showcase tourism destinations and tourist services in Santa Cruz
- **Publications and Promotional Materials** to document tourist experience, facility development, and features of local tourism

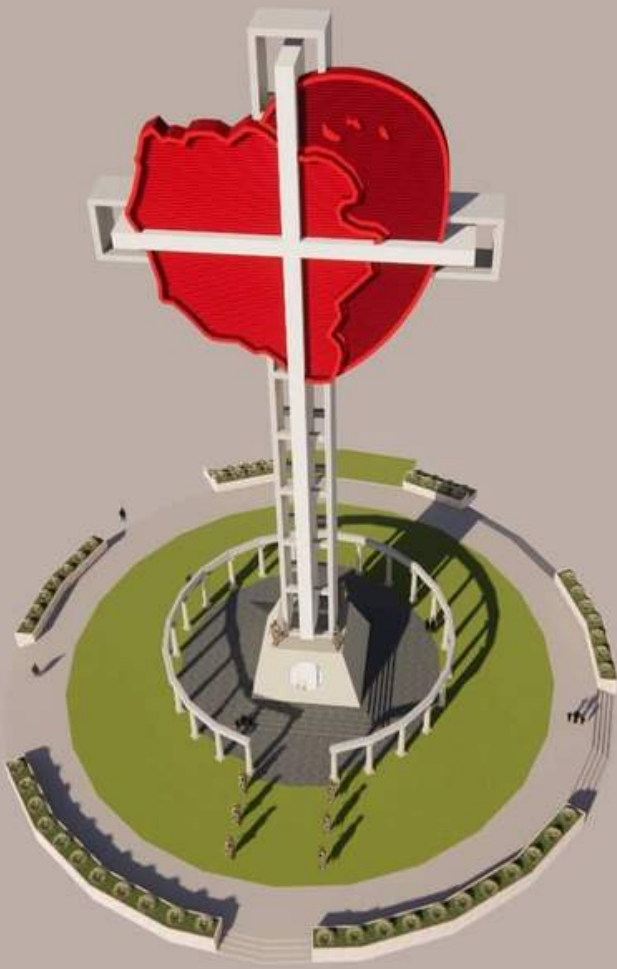
DIGITALIZATION

- **REDiscover Santa Cruz** website and social media branding and promotional initiatives to document eco-tourism related initiatives in the local tourism sector
- **Tourist Service Assistance Online Messaging Platform** to engage tourists and provide real-time assistance for those currently visiting destinations in Santa Cruz

Spatial Design

I LOVE SANTA CRUZ: HEART OF THE PHILIPPINES MONUMENT IN BARANGAY MAKULAPNIT

To memorialize and assert the unique geographical location of Santa Cruz within the Province of Marinduque as the heart of the Philippines, the local government envisions the construction of a landmark to draw tourists to the scenic views and sights of Barangay Makulapnit and its surrounding barangays where opportunities for farm tourism and mountainsideresort development also abound.





Spatial Design

TOURIST EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT IN HAKUPAN ISLAND, PALAD SANDBAR, AND MONGPONG ROCK FORMATION

To facilitate the convenient docking of tourist transport vessels and enhance the comfort of tourists visiting island destinations while centralizing the collection of relevant fees and monitoring of arrivals, the local government will invest in necessary infrastructure and equipment such as rubberized pier extensions, buoys, and other similar implements.

The local government will also distribute various supplies and equipment that can be rented out to tourists and provide income to community tourism enterprises.



**SEAL OF MORION
TOURIST SERVICE EXCELLENCE**

To ensure compliance and incentivize the alignment of private tourism enterprises operating within the territorial jurisdiction of the Municipality of Santa Cruz with the local government's tourism brand and identity, a Local Tourism Accreditation and Awards Board will be established. The Board shall have the mandate to recognize tourism enterprises that are able to achieve alignment with the vision of and objectives articulated in this plan as well as participation in the local government's key tourism, culture, and arts initiatives.

KEY INCENTIVES

- Discounts in annual fees paid to the local government
- Priority promotion in the local government's platforms
- Eligibility for subsidies, grants, and other forms of support

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Environmental safeguards and conservation
- Use of local supply sources, talents, and workforce
- Risk management
- Total service delivery to clients

ANNUAL TOURISM AWARDS

- Participation in municipal training programs
- Client satisfaction surveys and market preferences/trends
- Risk minimization efforts



**LA PORTA
DE BUYABOD**

A week-long trade, food fair and night market at the port area which serves as the gateway to Santa Cruz's tri-island tourism corridor culminating on the Wednesday of Holy Week



**Municipal
Lenten Parade**

A civic parade of local government officials, employees, school teachers, and other local cultural associations featuring snapshots from biblical history and characters



**SENAKULO
Passion Play**

An annually-staged Easter Passion Play featuring local community theater performers narrating the story of the Roman centurion Longinus and culminating in his beheading



This Municipal Tourism Strategic Development Plan is an initiative of Santa Cruz Municipal Mayor Marisa Red Martinez and embodies directions the local government aspires to implement in collaboration with community stakeholders, government agencies, and non-government organizations in Marinduque and around the Philippines.

For questions, inquiries, partnership opportunities, and collaborations, please reach us thru:

tourism@rediscoversantacruz.com
mayoroffice@rediscoversantacruz.com

Or visit the local government website

www.rediscoversantacruz.com for more information about Santa Cruz

This document was produced with technical support from the Center for Local Innovation and Capacity Development (CLICDPH, Inc.) and Balikatan sa Kaunlaran (BSK) National Foundation.

