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**CEBU BUSINESS**

## Other regions to employ Central Visayas' trade and tourism value-chain

By Ehda M. Dagooc (The Freeman) Updated September 22, 2010 12:00 AM Comments (0)

CEBU, Philippines – The effective strategy of Central Visayas in inter-relating trade and tourism by employing a value-chain system will now be replicated in the different regions in the country for the purpose of maximizing countryside industries with the help of the tourism market.

DTI-7 regional director Asteria Caberte said the region was able to make its own trade and tourism value chain through the help of German Technical Cooperation-Small and Medium Enterprise Development for Sustainable Employment Program (GTZ-Smedsep).

At least eight regions are identified to apply this strategy with the help of DTI-7 in collaboration with its respective DTI and DOT regional offices, these are; Regions 1, 5, 8, 10, 11, 14, and Caraga Region, including Central Visayas.

The value-chain roadmap will identify the trail of tourism destinations in these regions at the same time discover the best products that will be sold to tourists in each destination.

The national government handpicked Caberte to lead this strategy and to coach the rest of the regions in the proper implementation of the system.

The plan includes the establishment of "Souvenir Shopping Malls" in key growth centers, to serve as the major venue for souvenir products in the region.

"Tourism is the big market left untapped by our producers especially in the countryside areas," Caberte said.

With the strong collaboration with DOT, the trade agency in each region will be able to bridge producers direct to the market-tourists.

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industries.

DOT record showed that about 80 percent of the tourism spending goes to souvenirs. The Philippines generates an average of P31 million tourism-related revenues.

According to Caberte proper venue for the small souvenir traders in small islands or destination for instance, should be installed. Professionalizing the players by introducing a fair price practice should also be introduced.

"My observation is that the souvenir industry, not only in the Philippines but even internationally, is perceived as a cottage-type industry. It hasn't evolved into anything," Aldeguer said. **(FREEMAN)**

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