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RP tourism competitiveness slips five notches

By Abigail L. Ho
Philippine Daily Inquirer
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Filed Under: Economy and Business and Finance, Tourism

THE Philippines should beef up its travel and tourism-related facilities as well as create a single, recognizable global brand if it wants to regain its footing and climb up the global tourism competitiveness ladder.

In a presentation before industry stakeholders yesterday, Uwe Sturmman, private sector [promotion](#) project manager for German cooperation agency GTZ, said the country had to do something to arrest the drop in its ranking in the World Economic Forum Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report.

The country last year occupied the 81st spot among the more than 130 countries included in the study. This year, the country fell five notches to No. 86.

"The Philippines has to improve the quality of its tourism. People who come to the Philippines also visit other countries, and their tendency is to compare. They often say hotels and [resorts](#) in the Philippines are relatively more expensive, but the facilities are not that good," he related.

"There has to be quality standards in place to force (hotel and resort owners) to upgrade their facilities. Whatever star rating they have should match the quality of their facilities. There really should be stricter standards," he added.

Instead of tasking local government units and government agencies, such as the Department of Tourism, with monitoring hotels and resorts nationwide, he proposed the commissioning of a third-party assessor that would ensure that strict standards would be followed.

"People who offer poor or mediocre service shouldn't be allowed to get away with it," he said.

Apart from implementing stricter standards, he said the country should step up its marketing efforts, to communicate to the world what the Philippines has to offer.

"The Philippines needs a single corporate identity, a consistent brand that will be recognized worldwide, like Malaysia's 'Truly Asia' campaign. I know Malaysia poured a lot of money into that and the DOT doesn't have that big a budget. For this, the government can tap the private sector for funds. A 1-2-percent tourism tax on room rates can also help," he said.

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