STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE MANAGEMENT AND IMPACTS OF WHALE-SHARK WATCHING IN OSLOB, CEBU

By

Krystyna Osena

THESIS

Submitted to

KDI School of Public Policy and Management

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

2016

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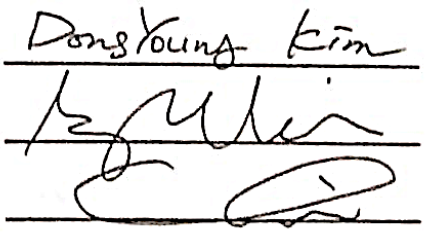

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ABSTRACT

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE MANAGEMENT AND IMPACTS OF WHALE-SHARK WATCHING IN OSLOB, CEBU

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Recently, there has been a rise of the whale-shark watching industry in the Philippines, which has received both local and international attention for offering interaction activities. In order to analyze the sustainability of whale-shark watching in the country, Oslob, Cebu was chosen as the main case for the study. The researcher aimed to identify the present gains and/or losses in the socio-economic living conditions, analyze the present and potential threats to the current whale-watching and/or ecotourism activities conducted by the fishermen in Oslob, Cebu, and suggest policy changes and stakeholder efforts which are required to ensure the ecological and socio-economic sustainability of whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu. Through the development and utilization of a sustainability report card and direct observation of the whale-shark watching activities, the researcher was able to realize that the ecotourism activities produced numerous socio-economic benefits for the community. Nonetheless, the research findings also brought into light issues of lax management and implementation of regulations for the protection of whale-sharks. Hence, there is a need to reevaluate the implementation and monitoring of whale-shark watching in the area to ensure the sustainability of the whale-shark watching activities.

ABSTRACT

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE MANAGEMENT AND IMPACTS OF WHALE-SHARK WATCHING IN OSLOB, CEBU

By

Krystyna Osena

최근에 필리핀의 생태관광 업계에서 인간이랑 고래상어의 상호작용 활동이 증가되고 있다. 따라서 필리핀의 세부 오슬롭에서 생태관광과 관련되어 있는 고래상어의 지속 가능성의 분석이 연구의 주요 사례로 선정되었다. 이 논문을 통해서 세부 오슬롭의 생태관광과 관련된 사회경제적 생활 조건에서 본 이익 및 손실을 분석하고, 어부를 통해 현재 고래상어의 상호작용 활동 및 잠재적인 위협을 분석한다. 또한 정책 변경을 제안하고 고래상어의 생태학적 및 사회경제적 지속 가능성을 보장하는데 필요한 이해 관계자의 노력을 촉구한다.

지속가능성 보고서 및 직접관찰 활동의 결과를 보면, 생태관광 활동을 통해 사회에서 다양한 경제적 혜택이 실현될 수 있는 것으로 관찰되었다. 그럼에도 불구하고 생태관광의 느슨한 관리와 고래상어의 보호를 위한 규정의 미비로 인해 이행하는데 있어 많은 문제점이 발견되었다. 따라서 고래상어의 상호작용 활동의 지속성을 보장하기 위해 영역 생태관광의 구현 및 모니터링 항목을 재평가 할 필요가 있다.

Dedicated to my parents, Emilio and Suzy Osena.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Through the support and assistance of many individuals and organizations, I was able to complete this thesis. First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for my parents and family being supportive and helpful during my studies and also for accompanying me during my site visit. Second, I would like to thank my professors, Prof. Dong-Young Kim and Prof. Songsu Choi, for their guidance and patience for my research. Third, I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Ponzo and the volunteers of Large Marine Vertebrates (LAMAVE) Research Institute Philippines, Mayor Guaren and the Municipality of Oslob, Cebu, Ate Veny of Chateau de Tan-Awan, and Rutherford Friolo from the Tan-awan Oslob Sea Wardens and Fishermen's Association (TOSWFA) for accommodating my requests in a short period. Fourth, thank you to my friend, Anne Pozon, for helping with the translations of the interview questionnaires. Fifth, to all my friends who were with me in South Korea, thank you for being continuously helpful and supportive. Finally, thank you to God for guiding and helping me through my research and studies.

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I. INTRODUCTION

While there are several sites being developed for whale-shark watching activities in the Philippines, there remain numerous issues on whether these sites and activities are sustainable for both the local communities and local ecosystems, particularly the whale-sharks, which are primarily affected by tourism in the area. In the case of Oslob, Cebu, numerous concerns were raised for the well-being of the whale-sharks as not all practices and/or activities towards the said animals are considered ethically-correct such that it may affect the laws of nature. Furthermore, in the case that these ecotourism practices and/or activities hold more damage than benefits for the local biodiversity, the local community may suffer great economic losses should there abrupt changes in the whales-sharks' behavior. Given that one of the many goals of ecotourism is to protect and sustain these ecological sites and species for the benefit of future generations, it is crucial that ecotourism activities such as whale-shark watching be evaluated and further improved such that more holistic gains can be achieved compared to the possible losses.

Currently, the community is highly dependent on the whale-shark watching activities. Most livelihood activities in the area are focused and/or based on the said tourism activities. Since the whale-shark watching activities started, there have been an increase of tourism-related businesses in the area (i.e. homestays, resorts, and local tours). However, as the tourism activities are mostly reliant on the presence and/or visit of whale-sharks in the area, the unpredictability of whale-shark movement and/or behavior presents a large uncertainty for the local residents of Oslob, Cebu.

A. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the present gains and/or losses in the socio-economic living conditions, in terms of income and livelihood, for the residents and/or municipality of Oslob, Cebu.

2. To analyze the present and potential threats to the current whale-watching and/or ecotourism activities conducted by the fishermen in Oslob, Cebu.
3. To generate suggestions for policy changes and stakeholder efforts which are required to ensure the ecological and socio-economic sustainability of whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How did the increase of whale-shark watching activities affect the socio-economic conditions, in terms of income and livelihood, the local community in Oslob, Cebu?
    a. What are the socio-economic gains and/or losses generated by the whale-shark watching activities for the local community in Oslob, Cebu?
    b. How did the whale-shark watching activities affect other economic activities in the area?
    c. How did the whale-shark watching activities impact the social relationships within and/or between the local government and community?
2. How does the ecotourism practices conducted by the fishermen in Oslob, Cebu impact the whale-shark watching activities?
    a. How does the fishermen and local government maintain and/or conserve the local environment for the protection of the whale-sharks?
    b. How does the fishermen and local government implement the ecological and/or ecotourism guidelines suggested by the marine biologists and/or environmental organizations?
    c. How does the whale-shark watching activities affect the behavior and/or number of whale-sharks visiting the area?
3. How does the policies and stakeholder efforts ensure the sustainability of whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu?

a. What were the socio-economic and environmental conditions before the whale-shark watching activities were regulated?
b. How does the current regulatory policies and mechanisms affect the socio-economic and environmental conditions in the area?
c. What are the additional policy changes and stakeholder efforts required to sustain the whale-shark watching activities in the area?

C. DEFINITION OF ECOTOURISM

With the recent surge of interests in climate change, environmental degradation, and resource scarcity, countries have been looking into sustainable means of boosting their economies. In the case of countries which have an abundance of biodiversity and ecosystems, more effort has been placed into the development and promotion of tourism or rather ecotourism.

Following the Brundtland Commission (1987) and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro (1992), there has been increasing attention towards sustainable development and green growth. Under the premise of future generations facing a shortage of resources combined with climate change, increasing populations and demands; scientists and environmental activists have called for a shift in industrial and production practices such that environmental strains can be reduced to ensure the survival of ecosystems and future generations. As a result of increased environmental awareness, there has been a trend of tapping into green initiatives and/or sustainable activities which required a balanced and holistic approach, with considerations towards the environmental, social, and economic conditions of communities/societies, towards development.

One of the green initiatives taken by many countries is ecotourism. Deviating from the traditional forms of tourism, ecotourism is a nature-based approach to visiting ecologically-abundant areas. While there are many definitions of ecotourism, for the purpose of the research it will be according to Gale and Hill (2009) which is "a way in which increasing numbers of visitors seeking an intrinsically environmental tourism experience can be accommodated, whilst minimizing the costs and enhancing the benefits associated with natural area tourism." By defining ecotourism as both an economic activity and a means to preserving the ecosystems associated with the said activity, the balance between the core components of sustainable development can be emphasized.

While ecotourism has been identified as one of the activities which promote sustainable development and green growth, there are still numerous issues in the said industry. As ecotourism still generate tourist activities which may be detrimental to the environment, particulary with the increasing interest and number of tourists in many ecotourism sites, there are numerous concerns on whether ecotourism is sustainable in the long-term. Hence, there remains a need to improve ecotourism practices, activities, and related policies and/or legislations to ensure the environmental and economic sustainability of the said industry.

D. GLOBAL WHALE WATCHING TRENDS

With the rise of awareness for environmental and/or biodiversity, there has been a shift from consumptive use to non-consumptive use of various animals. In the case of whales, dolphins, and other marine species, there has been increasing demand to ban whaling and consumption of the said animals due to their decreasing population. Wearing et al (2014) explain that while whaling remains a debatable issue for many countries, whale watching is currently the best alternative in terms of environmental and economic sustainability.

Notably, whale watching is not restricted to high-income countries or low-income countries. Since whales are migratory species, sightings of the said species are not restricted to one country and/or continent. According to Dempster (2009), in the case of high-income countries such as the United States, Ireland, New Zealand, etc., a rough estimation of number of people who have experience whale-watching is at around 100 million with a projected growth rate of 10 million per year. On the other hand, middle-income countries, mostly located in the Pacific countries and Latin America, experienced rapid growth in terms of whale watching portion in the 1990s (Dempster 2009). Based on these observations, whale watching, as a tourist attraction, is expected to continue its growth. Furthermore, it should be considered that with increased knowledge-sharing capacities via the internet, publicity of whale watching activities are bound to increase and attract more visitors to whale watching sites.

With its continued growth, growth in economic values for local communities are expected. Nonetheless, there remain substantial concerns on the environmental and/or conservation value of whale watching. On a positive note, tourists and/or visitors' exposure and participation in whale watching activities should raise awareness on environmental and/or conservation issues (Wearing et al 2014). Nonetheless, there are numerous issues on the conduct of whale watching activities. Parsons (2012) explain that active and/or invasive forms of whale watching could have indirect and direct impacts on the whales and while existing policies were constructed to mitigate the effects of whale watching, there is little binding effect to comply with the said regulations.

E. WHALE-SHARK WATCHING IN OSLOB, CEBU

Situated at the center of the Coral Triangle, the Philippines is recognized by ecologists as the "global center of marine biodiversity" (Asian Development Bank 2014). With its

location, the country has become a transit zone for migratory marine species such as sea turtles, dolphins, and whales.

Located at the southern tip of Cebu and facing the Cebu Strait, Oslob is around 115 kilometers from the Cebu City. Oslob is a 4th class municipality in the island of Cebu with 21 barangays including Tan-awan wherein whale-shark watching is primarily conducted (Philippine Statistics Authority 2014). For the purpose of the research, it should also be noted that Oslob is a hundred meters away from the Bohol Sea which is one of the key areas for marine biodiversity in the country (Lato 2012).

Craven (2012) explains that due to its close proximity to the Bohol Sea, whale-sharks, otherwise known as *butandings*, became frequent visitors to Oslob, Cebu. Being one of the countries which first initiated the protection of whale-sharks, the Philippine government signed a legislation, Fisheries Administrative Ordinance 193 (1998), which prohibits the catch, sale, purchase, transport, export, and killing of whale-sharks such that it was considered as a protected species which was later considered as pests for interrupting fishing practices of local fishermen (Craven 2012).

In an effort to protect their fishing activities from the whale-sharks, the local fishermen of Oslob, Cebu started luring whale-sharks away from fishing areas by feeding the said species with shrimps. According to Lato (2012), in September 2011, local fishermen of Oslob, Cebu discovered the economic gains of whale-sharks when they were approached and paid for their services by tourists who observed their luring activities with the whale-sharks (Craven 2012). Initially, the whale-shark watching and feeding activities conducted by the local fishermen were unregulated and brought numerous risks for the whale-sharks. Hence, the local government unit (LGU) of Oslob, Cebu passed ordinances to regulate the whale-shark watching activities which included guidelines, regulations, fines, and fees.

Since the whale-shark watching activities started in 2011, the community members of Oslob were said to have largely benefitted from the new sources of income brought by tourism in the area. However, while the local government has made efforts to regulate the whale-shark watching activities and tourism in the area, there are still criticisms against the whale-shark watching activities conducted in the municipality on the concerns for the whale-sharks' welfare and the environmental conditions where the said species are held. Furthermore, as the movement of the whale-sharks remain highly unpredictable, there are concerns on the sustainability of the whale-shark watching activities and the high dependency of the municipality and its citizens on the tourism activities for their livelihood and/or income.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to generate a holistic assessment of whale-shark watching in Oslob, Cebu, it is necessary to identify the components which will be utilized in the evaluation of the ecotourism activities in the chosen site. Also, through a review of other cases of whale-watching in different countries and other parts of the Philippines, the researcher should identify commonalities in terms of opportunities and threats to the sustainability of whale-shark watching. Finally, a review of a sustainability assessment tracking tool and a sustainability report card which can be utilized in the sustainability assessment will be conducted for further improvement in the research framework.

A. SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM

In order to assess whale-watching as a sustainable tourism activity, it is necessary to define ecotourism. Generally, Kiper (2012) explains that ecotourism is a form of alternative tourism which is largely utilized by developing countries for their conservation efforts and economic development. In order to understand the dynamics between ecotourism and sustainable development, Kiper (2013) elaborates that,

> Ecotourism, as an alternative tourism, involves visiting natural areas in order to learn, to study, or to carry out activities environmentally friendly, that is, a tourism based on the nature experience, which enables the economic and social development of local communities. It focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, its landscape, flora, fauna and their habitats, as well as cultural artifacts from the locality. A symbiotic and complex relationship between the environment and tourist activities is possible when this philosophy can be translated into appropriate policy, careful planning and tactful practicum.

Based on the above explanation of Kiper, ecotourism is not simply limited to the conservation of the environment and/or ecological systems. Rather, there is an interplay between political, social, and environmental forces where there is a need to maximize the economic benefits while lessening the damages or threats against the environment and social communities. Furthermore, it should be noted that there was an emphasis for sound polices and planning to ensure that the balance between the need for ecological conservation and cultural preservation is met even in the pursuit for economic development through ecotourism.

Ecotourism as a form of economic development would provide alternative forms of livelihood through tourism to communities while ensuring the preservation of their cultures. However, as the term "ecotourism" implies, alternative forms of livelihood will be largely reliant on the conservation of ecological systems and/or environments of the tourism sites. While the goal is economic development, sustainability of economic activities and livelihoods would depend on the environmental protection policies and conservation efforts by the communities which will ensure that their source of incomes will not be damaged in the process of conducting tourist activities in resource-rich areas.

As a guidance to conducting sustainable ecotourism, several literatures have proposed specific guidelines which should be utilized by the stakeholders involved in ecotourism activities. Pasape, Anderson, and Lindi (2013), collected, organized, and summarized the ecotourism guidelines into the following:

1. Not leading degradation of the resource and should be developed in an environmentally sound manner;
2. Be able to provide long-term benefits to the resource, to the local community and industry;

3. Involve education among all parties, local corn mutinies, government, non-government organizations, industry and tourists (before, during and after the trip);
4. Provide first-hand, participatory and enlightening experiences;
5. Encourage all-parts recognition of the intrinsic value of resources;
6. Involve acceptance of the resource in its own terms, and in recognition of its limits, which involve supply-oriented management;
7. Promote understanding and involve partnerships between many players, which could involve government, non-governmental organizations industries, scientists and local (both before and during operations);
8. Promote moral and ethical responsibilities and behavior towards the natural and cultural environment by all players.

Based on these guidelines, there is visible emphasis on stakeholder cooperation and/or involvement. Stakeholders in the context of ecotourism is not simply limited to the local parties/actors which include the local government offices, community members, non-governmental offices, etc., but also includes the tourists who visit the ecotourism sites. Furthermore, it should be realized that sustainable ecotourism aims to enhance the stakeholders' awareness of environmental and conservation issues such that there would be a higher appreciation for the ecological value of the ecotourism sites while minimizing the damages imposed on the environment and culture of the said sites.

Considering that ecotourism is still a form of tourism, there is also a need to identify more specific standards for ecotourism activities/products. Weaver and Lawton (2007) identified key components and underlined specific activities which should ensure the sustainability of the ecological, cultural, and economic components of ecotourism.

Table 1: Standards of Ecotourism (Weaver and Lawton, 2007)

A. PROTECTION OF ECOSYSTEM * Maintenance of local ecosystems. * Protection and/or conservation of wildlife and endangered species. * Harmonious interaction between the locals/foreign visitors and wildlife.	D. INFRASTRUCTURES AND SIGNBOARDS * Infrastructures and signboards should blend in the environment.
B. MAINTENANCE OF PHYSICO-CHEMICAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA * Maintenance of freshwater and marine resources' quality. * Ban on wastes and contamination of the environment.	E. SUSTAINABILITY * Maintenance of carrying capacity of the environment. * Environmental education program. * Livelihoods should be targeted for local communities rather than foreigners. * Local government support through ordinances and resolutions. * Community-based management boards and other related agencies should ensure strict enforcement of environmental laws.
C. CONSERVATION OF LOCAL CULTURE AND HISTORY * Maintenance of local culture. * Maintenance of historical infrastructures.	

While ecotourism is being labeled as one of the key strategies of sustainable development, there remains numerous issues on the said activity due to concerns on the protection and/or conservation of ecological systems. Being a tourism activity, the input of large numbers of visitors in local communities would inevitably disrupt local cultures and ecological systems. Hence, stakeholders involved in ecotourism activities are challenged to fill the gap on environmental awareness by both local and foreign stakeholders to ensure that the conduct of ecotourism activities would not lead to further degradation of ecological systems and local cultures.

B. ECOTOURISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

Considering the Philippines' rich natural environment and geographical characteristics, there is a large range of opportunities to develop ecotourism in various areas of the country. Furthermore, as the country still maintains majority of rural activities such as agriculture

and fishery, the natural environment is relatively preserved and/or not damaged by industrial activities. Alampay and Libosada Jr. (2003) states that ecotourism in the Philippines is one of the "fastest-growing tourism niches" since the 1980s. However, similar to many developing countries, the actual definition and/or meaning of ecotourism, its costs, and benefits to the environment and community remain vague for the stakeholders promoting and/or participating in the said tourism activity. Considering the nature of the activity which is targeted for profit, bridging the gap in realizing the sustainability of ecotourism activities for both the community and environment remains large.

In the Philippines, ecotourism was defined by the National Ecotourism Development Council (2000) as "a form of sustainable tourism within a natural and cultural heritage area where community participation, protection and management of natural resources, culture and indigenous knowledge and practices, environmental education and ethics as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host communities and satisfaction of visitors." While the aforementioned definition tried to incorporate the various components of sustainable development, there remains a vagueness on the core objectives and/or essence of ecotourism. Furthermore, economic benefits were emphasized as the main gains from the identified form of tourism when there needs to be a balance between social and environment benefits such that the sustainability of the ecotourism benefits are not compromised in the process of maximizing economic profit. Based on the following observations on the Philippine Government's definition of ecotourism, there remains a lot of areas in the country's ecotourism components which should be further developed and evaluated.

As stated earlier, there is a large number of ecotourism opportunities and/or activities in the Philippines as a result of its natural environment and geographical characteristics.

Alampay and Libosada Jr. (2003) identifies the following examples of ecotourism sites according to their resource base:

Table 2: Examples of Ecotourism Sites or Programs Identified for Each Type of Tourism Resource Base (Alampay and Libosada 2003)

RESOURCE BASE	**EXAMPLES OF ECOTOURISM SITES AND PROGRAMS**
Marine	PALAWAN: El Nido Protected Areas
	DONSOL, SORSOGON: Whale-Shark Watching
	AKLAN: Boracay
	NEGROS ORIENTAL: Danjugan Island and Reef System
	LA UNION: Agoo-Damortis Seashore
Terrestrial	PAMPANGA/TARLAC: Mt. Pinatubo
	SAMAR: Calbiga Caves
	BOHOL: Chocolate Hills
	DAVAO: Mt. Apo
Fresh-Water	ILOCOS NORTE: Paoay Lake
	ILLIGAN CITY: Tinago Falls
	QUIRINO: Governor's Rapids
	ANTIQUE: Siraan Hot Spring
Cultural Sites	ILOCOS NORTE: Cape Bojeador Light House
	IFUGAO: Banaue/Ifugao Rice Terraces
	AKLAN: Farm Tourism Village
Man-Made	TARLAC: San Jose Ecotourism Park
	ILOILO: Bucari-Aganan Reforestration

Generally, for ecotourism, the main goals should include the preservation of the natural environment and protection of wildlife. However, it cannot be denied that for the municipalities, towns, and/or cities which have ecotourism sites, there has been an influx of economic benefits and/or incentives for its residents and neighboring municipalities. In many cases, there has been a shift of economic activities from the traditional economic activities such as fishing and farming to tourism-related activities. For example in Sabang, Palawan where the Puerto Princesa Underground River is located, Jalani (2012) identified

that there was high migration to the municipality and large-shift of livelihood changes from fishing and non-timber wood usage to ecotourism as a result of higher incomes from the former activity. Similar trends can be recognized in another ecotourism site in the Philippines located in Negros Oriental, Apo Island. In the case of Apo Island, following a fisheries intervention in 1986, there has been an increase in economic benefits from donations for the maintenance of the coral reefs, increased employment opportunities from resorts, and increased income of fishermen, from both the municipality and neighboring municipalities, who also serve as boat operators (Cadiz and Calumpong 2000). In the cases of both Sabang and Apo Island, residents within the economic sites and also from neighboring towns have largely benefitted in terms of increased incomes and/or employment opportunities from tourism. Nonetheless, it has been pointed out by the scholars who published the papers on Sabang (Jalani 2012) and Apo Island (Cadiz and Calumpong 2000) that there remains large risks on the environmental protection of the two ecotourism sites following the migration trends as the new residents and/or neighboring municipalities' residents may not be properly educated on sustainable ecotourism practices. In addition, it should be noted that while these ecotourism sites have been successful in inviting new investments and maximizing profit, there has been minimal effort on the environmental protection and/or protection of the ecotourism sites. Hence, while the municipalities and its neighbors have largely benefitted in terms of economic gains, there remains a large risk on the sustainability of their main income source which is ecotourism due to the imbalance of costs and benefits.

C. WHALE-WATCHING AS AN ECOTOURISM

Given the surge of interests in sustainable development, environmental issues, and innovative green economic activities, the ecotourism industry has experienced significant growth over the past few years. In the case of whale-watching, the said ecotourism activity

has been present for over a decade particularly in countries with territorial waters that serve as the whales and other mammals' migratory routes.

Recently, several environmental groups have opted to promote whale-watching as an ecotourism activity in order to discourage commercial whaling (Parsons 2012). By encouraging the growth of the whale-watching industry, developing countries would be able to recognize the economic value of the whales, dolphins, and other cetaceans, resulting to governments of developing countries could contribute to conservation efforts through legislations and policies which would inhibit the hunting and/or consumption of a valuable tourism resource (Parsons 2012).

The International Whaling Commission defined whale watching as "any commercial enterprise which provides for the public to see cetaceans on their natural habitat" (Woods-Ballard et al. 2003) Unlike the more accessible means to see whales which is through aquariums, whale-watching by definition is an activity which involves tourists to travel to areas wherein whales and other cetaceans are known to visit and/or inhabit (Parsons 2012). Furthermore, Parsons (2012) add that whale-watching is not limited to boat-based activities, other activities include aerial and/or platform observations as well as activities wherein people are allowed to swim with whales.

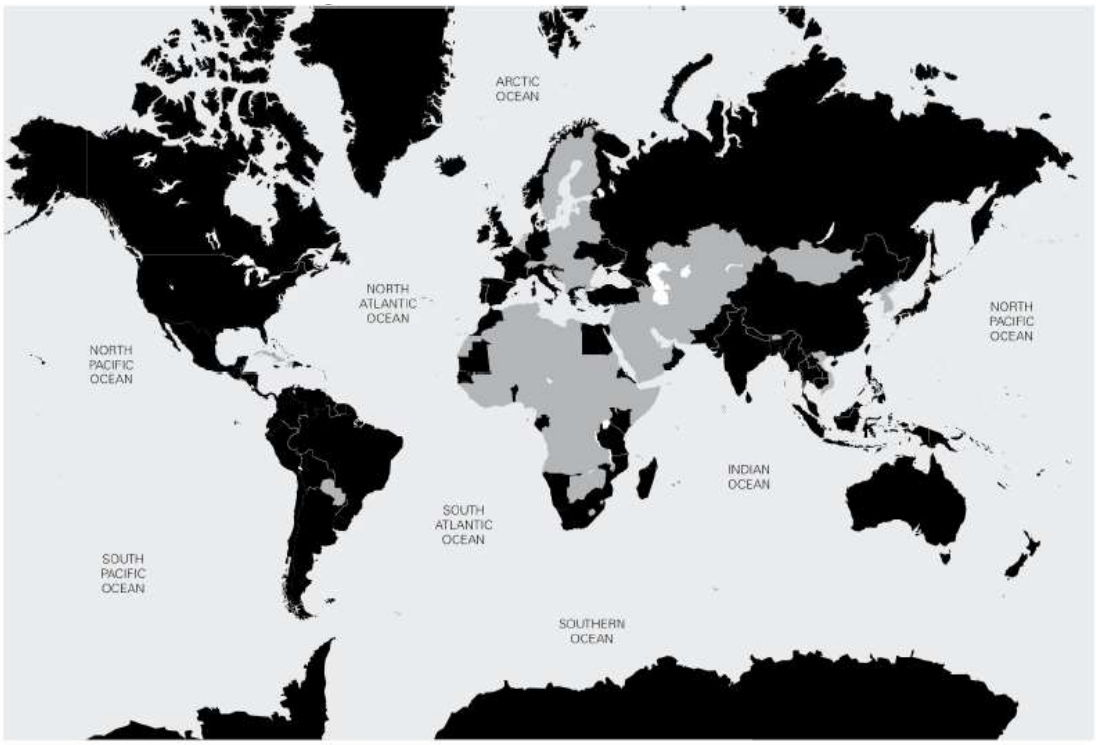
Currently, whale-watching is one of the fastest growing tourism activities. Data from the 1990s show that from 65 countries practicing commercial whale-watching activities in 1994, the industry was able to grow to 87 countries by 1998 (Curtin 2003). By 2009, the number of countries involved in the whale-watching industry has grown to 119 while the industry attracts 13 million tourists, generates 2.1 billion US dollars, and provides employment for 13,000 people (Parsons 2012).

According to the International Fund for Animal Welfare (1999), a rate of return of 10% was recorded in the 1990s for 10 years by a random sample of operators. Inclusion of socio-economic values such as public return for community-based whale-watching activities would further raise the rate of return to 25% (Curtin 2003).

Considering the economic benefits which can be brought to local communities in developing countries, there is a need for continued reevaluation of the related ecotourism activities. By ensuring that conservation practices are utilized consistently through the conduct of whale-watching activities, minimal damage can be brought to the whales. As the whales are the main economic resource being utilized by local communities, it is necessary to take the appropriate measures to ensure that the whales are not endangered in the process such that sustainability of the said economic activity can be achieved.

1. SORSOGON, PHILIPPINES

Figure 1: IFAW's Map of the Global Distribution of Whale Watching Countries – Black-colored countries had whale-watching activities in 2008 (Connor, Campbell, Knowles, and



One of the key areas for whale-shark watching in the Philippines is in Donsol, Sorsogon. In the case of Donsol, Sorsogon, Heah (2006) states that whale-shark interaction activities started in the late 1990s/early 2000s. While there are other areas in the country with whale-shark activities, Donsol became known as the "Whale Sharks capital of the World" (Heah 2006). However, even as the area was continued to be publicized as a whale-shark capital, as a small fishing town, Donsol did not have the necessary infrastructures nor education to conduct whale-watching activities without endangering the whale-sharks (Heah 2006).

However, through the cooperation of stakeholders and conservation groups such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the local government and community members were able to receive proper education on the conservation, protection, and guidelines on tourist-whale-shark interaction (Heah 2006). Furthermore, relevant policies and regulations were enacted in order to monitor and organize whale-shark interaction activities.

Through whale-shark ecotourism, the local economy has enjoyed many benefits in terms of creation of employment opportunities and increased incomes. Heah (2006) explain that in 1998, 800 registered visitors with a total income of PHP454, 875 (USD 10,285) was recorded and by 2005, 300 jobs have been created with the number of visitors increasing to 7000. Initially, Donsol was ranked as the 76th poorest municipality in the region but by 2005 it was able to significantly improve the local economy and ranked at the 17th poorest (Heah 2006).

2. KAIKOURA, NEW ZEALAND

Similar to the case of Donsol, Sorsogon, whale-watching in Kaikoura, New Zealand became one of the primary sources of economic benefits. While whale-

watching only started in the 2000s for Donsol, whale-watching in Kaikoura can be traced back to late 1980s when the Indigenous Maori community suffered from economic recession following changes in the regulation of cray fishing industry in the area (Parsons 2012).

Through a partnership between an American researcher and a local fisherman, NatureWatch, which provided the whale-watching packages, was established (Parsons 2012). Later, other Maori entrepreneurs also realized the value in whale-watching resulting to the development of NatureWatch to WhaleWatch (Curtis 2003). In 1989, around 10,000 visitors were recorded then significantly increased to over 100,000 in 1993 and 873,000 in 1998 while annual growth rate of the tourism industry in Kaikoura was estimated at 14%.

Hoyt (2007) cite the following factors which contributed to the success of the whale-watching: (1) close proximity of whales to the shore, (2) year-round presence of dolphins in the area, (3) variety of land and boat tours, (4) New Zealand's permit-based system which regulated the number of tour businesses for conservation purposes, (5) international airport located 2-3 hours, and (6) inexpensive accommodation and amenities which also promotes the local culture.

3. EL VIZCAINO, MEXICO

The development of whale-watching in El Vizcaino, Mexico varies greatly from the previous cases. Unlike the previous cases, whale-watching was initially developed as a tourism package offered to the tourists coming from San Diego, United States in the late 1960s to 1970s (Hoyt 2007). As the operators were California-based, Hoyt (2007) explains that there were little economic benefits offered to the Mexicans, particularly the fishermen living in the whale-watching area.

In an effort to support the fishermen and local community, Hoyt and Iñiguez (2008) explains that the government of Mexico converted the area into a marine protected area (MPA). Through the Mexican government's effort, boat traffic, fishing practices, pollution, and nearby industrial activities were regulated to conserve and/or protect the habitat and mating activities of the gray whales (Hoyt 2007). Furthermore, the Mexican government enacted a law which limited the presence of small pangas (boats) to the area such that local fishermen would benefit as their boats would be utilized for whale-watching activities (Hoyt and Iñiguez 2008).

D. SUSTAINABILITY REPORT CARD

1. SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT TRACKING TOOL (SATT)

In the case of the Philippines, Calanog, Reyes, and Eugenio (2012) states that a sustainability assessment tracking tool (SATT) has been utilized in community-based ecotourism enterprises. Primarily used as a monitoring tool, the SATT is utilized at (1) project conceptualization and/or initial implementation, (2) mid-term project implementation, and (3) at project completion.

In the SATT developed by Calanog et al. (2012), seven key factors were identified and evaluated through thirty-eight (38) questions which were representative of monitoring indicators were presented as a checklist. The checklist is accomplished through a scoring system wherein the indicators/questions are graded from 0-3 (0-lowest; 3-highest). Additionally, for negative strategies, there are supplementary questions/indicators wherein a score of negative one (-1) can be utilized (Calanog, Reyes, and Eugenio 2012). In order to increase the reliability of the assessment, a qualitative explanation and/or evidence should also be provided next to individual scores.

For thirty-eight questions, the highest score which can be achieved is 114. In order to calculate the final score, the total of the individual scores from all the questions will divided by 114 and multiplied by 100 in order to generate the percentage score of the SATT (Calanog, Reyes, and Eugenio 2012).

Based on the percentage scores from the assessment, the sustainability of the ecotourism sites can be interpreted through the following table as stated in "A manual on establishing Community-based Ecotourism Enterprise (CBEE) in the Philippines:"

Table 3: Percentage Qualitative Interpretation (Calanog, Reyes, and Eugenio 2012)

83.0% - 100.0%	Highly Sustainable
66.4% - 82.9%	Sustainable
49.8% - 66.3%	Moderately Sustainable
33.2% - 49.7%	Moderately Unsustainable
16.6% - 33.1%	Unsustainable
01.0% - 16.5%	Highly Unsustainable

2. WHALE-WATCHING SUSTAINABILITY REPORT CARD

For the purpose of both internal and external evaluations, Hoyt (2007) proposed the development of a sustainability report card. The sustainability report card will be primarily utilized to evaluate the sustainability of the whale-watching activities at the local/community level. However, with consideration for the overall environmental impacts, tourist profiles are also included in the evaluation as one of the aims of ecotourism is to enhance the environmental awareness of the visitors (Hoyt 2007). The following is Hoyt's sample sustainability report card with specific questions on whale-watching activities:

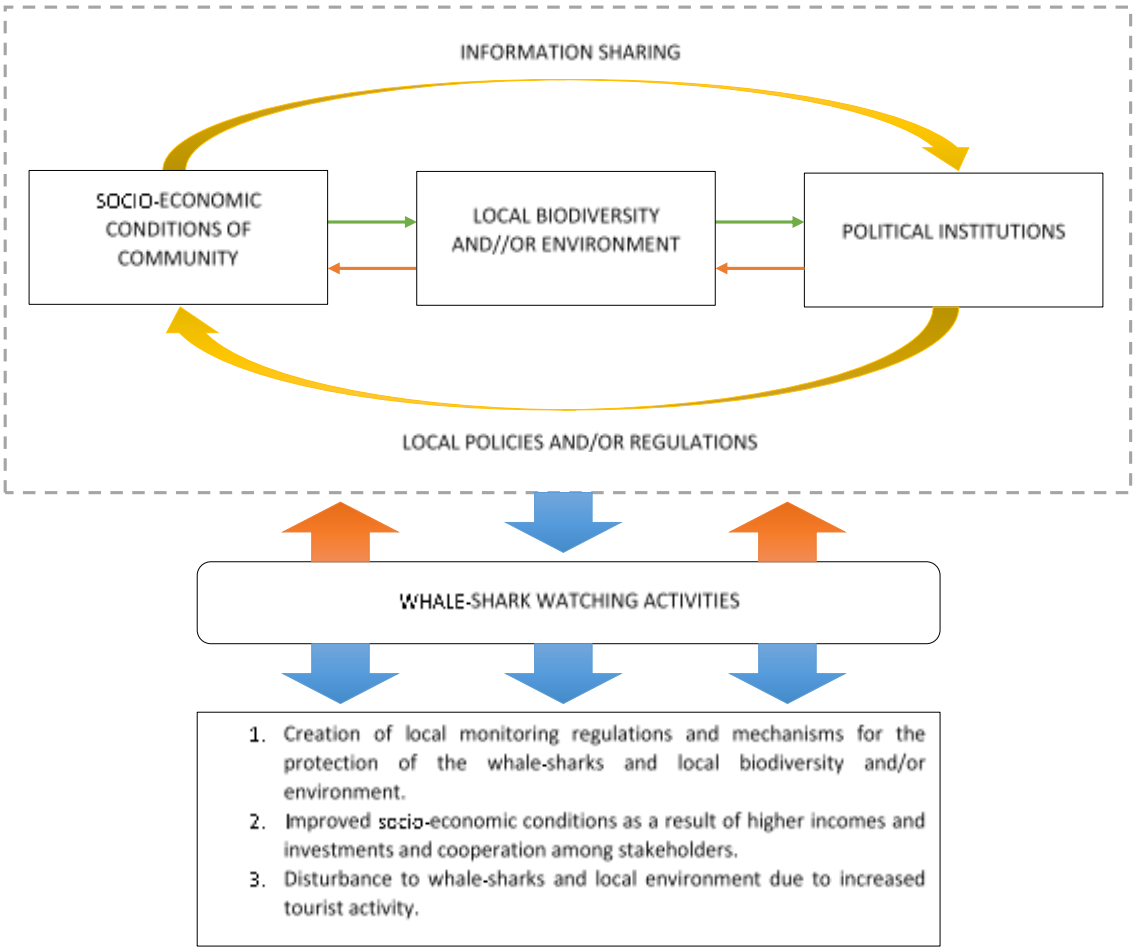
Table 4: Sustainability Report Card (Hoyt 2007)

Impact of Whale Watching	Indicators/Area of Evaluation
Is the wildlife resource degraded or in the process of degradation?	Is the population growth positive? Is the population growth rate/birth rate/mortality rate the same, higher, or lower? Are animals leaving the area? Are animals being approached or watched closely resulting to behavioral changes?
Is the overall environment degraded?	What is the quality of the water system? What about the effluent? Pollution assessment of local waters and coastline.
What is the tourist profile?	Are the visitors local, national, or international? Did the visitors travel by air? How far? Did the visitors arrive by private or public transportation?
What are the operator and/or local profiles?	Are they knowledgeable about marine mammals, the local environment and culture, and whale watching? Are they personable and good teachers? Do they have a sense of responsibility toward the activities of visitors in their "care"? Are business practices compatible with sustainable tourism? Does marine wildlife watching contribute to the community?

In Hoyt's sustainability report card, there is visible emphasis on the environmental factors of whale-watching. In the case of Oslob, Cebu, there would be a need to raise additional social and/or economic questions/indicators to gain a more holistic sustainability assessment. Prior to the start of whale-shark watching activities, the local government and community of Oslob, Cebu experienced poor financial conditions. However, with the start of the whale-shark watching activities, there has been an economic boom in the small town such that there has been significant changes in the livelihood and lifestyle of the residents. In such cases, identifying the link between environmental and socio-economic factors will be critical as both factors could either have positive and negative impacts to one another. With the continued growth of tourism in the area, there would be changes in the socio-economic conditions which could negatively change the environmental landscapes and affect the presence and/or visits of whale-sharks to the area.

III. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Whale-shark Watching Activities in Oslob, Cebu



In the case of whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu, several variables which functioned both as dependent and independent variables were identified. Due to the characteristics of ecotourism activities, it was realized that the variables of the study had a functional relationship wherein specific actions and/or decisions originating from a specific variable can affect other variables and likewise other variables generate similar effects and/or reactions. As a result, a single variable cannot be isolated as the main independent or dependent variable.

As shown in the figure above, local biodiversity and/or environment was placed as a central variable in the cyclical relationship which included the political institutions and socio-economic conditions of the community. As the local biodiversity and/or environment serves as the main resource base, it can be assumed that changes in the socio-economic conditions of the community may negatively or positively affect the local biodiversity and/or environment which could affect the political institutions, in terms of local governance. In addition, the socio-economic conditions of the community may also provide for a participatory governance mechanism which would allow information-sharing between the local community and local governance units. Based on the conditions of the local biodiversity and/or environment and information shared by the local community, the local government should generate local policies and/or regulations which should serve to maximize economic benefits and improve environmental conditions. As socio-economic and environmental conditions are bound to change with the local policies and/or regulations, the cycle would continue until pareto optimality is reached.

On the other hand, whale-shark watching activities were treated as a separated variable which also functions as an independent and dependent variable. Initially, whale-shark watching in Oslob started as an informal activity which was managed by the fishermen. In the short time-span that the said ecotourism activity has been promoted and conducted, it has experienced various regulatory changes and formalization.

Nonetheless, the whale-shark watching activities have also affected the socio-economic conditions of the community, local biodiversity, and political institutions. According to the review of similar cases and literature, expected outcomes from the whale-shark watching activities include the creation of local monitoring regulations and mechanisms for the protection of the whale-sharks and local biodiversity and/or environment; improved socio-economic conditions as a result of higher incomes and investments and cooperation among

stakeholders; and disturbance to whale-sharks and local environment due to increased tourist activity.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. MIXED METHODS DESIGN

In assessing the sustainability of whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu, there would be a necessity to acquire and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data. Hence, the researcher will employ the mixed methods design in order to generate a holistic evaluation and produce accurate projections for the whale-shark watching industry in Oslob, Cebu.

For the study, the convergent parallel design will be utilized wherein both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and analyzed equally at the same period. Through the convergent parallel design, the researcher should be able to consult with environmental experts and local tourism offices at the site while being able to collect and analyze data in order to provide a holistic assessment through the utilization of a sustainability report card.

B. METHODOLOGY

1. DIRECT OBSERVATION

In order to understand the current situation and issues of whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu, direct observation will be utilized in order to collect evidences in the field. Observations, according to Yin (2012), “can focus on human actions, physical environments, or real-world events.” Afterwards, a narrative should be constructed by the researcher according to what was experienced, seen, and heard (Yin 2012). In writing the narrative, the researcher should clarify his/her position, on whether the narrative is neutral, or the researcher’s personal interpretation of the events, or representative of the participants being observed (Yin 2012).

As the researcher actively participated in the whale-shark watching activities, the researcher constructed a narrative which was based on personal interpretation of the activities and/or actions which were observed in the case of Oslob, Cebu.

2. SUSTAINABILITY REPORT CARD FOR THE STUDY

During the beginning stages of the whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu, Large Marine Vertebrates (LAMAVE) Research Institute Philippines conducted an ecological assessment of the issues and prospects for the said ecotourism activity. Five years after the regulation of whale-shark watching activities, a sustainability report card should be constructed and distributed in order to reevaluate the variables and current conditions present in Oslob, Cebu. By constructing a sustainability report card, the researcher should be able to assess the overall situation and related issues which may hinder the sustainability of whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu. Furthermore, by conducting stakeholder engagements, the researcher should be able to identify specific areas for improvement and provide policy recommendations with consideration to the local community.

In order to evaluate the whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu, a sustainability report card was developed. In the Philippines, a sustainability assessment tracking tool (SATT) was developed by Calanog, Reyes, and Eugenio (2012) in order to evaluate community-based ecotourism enterprises. In the SATT, the assessment is qualitative but a point system was utilized in order to quantify the sustainability of ecotourism projects in the country. Since the SATT was targeted towards community-based ecotourism activities, the assessment can be effectively targeted towards specific communities and conditions due to its small and limited scope. Hence, the basic structure

and point system utilized in the SATT was identified as the most effective means to measure the sustainability of the ecotourism activities in Oslob, Cebu.

Nonetheless, the SATT aimed to evaluate the general characteristics of ecotourism sites and activities such that there were certain indicators and related questions which were not applicable, such as energy management, sourcing of building materials for construction purposes, and presence of indigenous people, to the whale-shark watching activities due to its unique characteristics. As mentioned earlier, the indicators were created for a general assessment of ecotourism sites resulting to limitations in its application to specific kinds of ecotourism. As the SATT was constructed to evaluate ecotourism activities in general, the utilization of SATT may not be sufficient in providing a clear assessment of the current conditions, issues, and sustainability projections of the whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu. Since ecotourism activities vary in terms of their affected ecology, wildlife, local communities, and other related conditions, there is a need to identify new factors, indicators, and questions which are more focused towards the whale-shark watching activities.

While certain indicators and/or criteria in Calanog, Reyes, and Eugenio's SATT were utilized as they addressed community-level conditions, there was a need to identify relevant indicators and construct related questions to the whale-shark watching activities. In order to construct a well-focused sustainability report card, Hoyt's Sustainability Report Card (2007) and Weaver and Lawton's Standards of Ecotourism (2007) was utilized as the main bases for the development of indicators, criteria, and related questions in the research' sustainability report card.

While Hoyt's Sustainability Report Card contained highly-relevant indicators and questions to the whale-shark watching activities, a quantitative system was not included in the said report card such that it is difficult to utilize the said tool for a sustainability

assessment. As a result, there was a need to develop a more sophisticated assessment tool through the combination of the SATT, Hoyt's Sustainability Report Card, and other related literature.

As explained earlier, the basic structure of the SATT was applied in the sustainability report card for whale-shark watching in Oslob, Cebu. However, unlike the SATT's point system which ranged from zero (lowest) to three (highest), the researcher decided to increase the range such that zero would remain as the lowest and four as the highest. By increasing the range of the point system, a middle and/or average rating (two) can be utilized by the respondents. Furthermore, unlike the SATT which contained thirty-eight indicators/questions, only twenty-five indicators/questions were provided in the sustainability report card for whale-shark watching. Unlike the SATT which had a broader scope in order to cover various forms of ecotourism activities and related conditions, the sustainability report card which will be utilized for the research is targeted towards a specific ecotourism activity such that some conditions identified in the SATT are not available and/or relevant for whale-shark watching activities. Lastly, the sustainability indicators and relevant questions were divided into four key areas: ecology, economy, social, and politics/governance for a more holistic understanding of the whale-shark watching industry in Oslob, Cebu.

* For the complete copy of the sustainability report card, see Appendix B.

3. INTERVIEWS

In order to facilitate the completion of the sustainability report card, the researcher conducted interviews with agencies and/or individuals with substantial knowledge and/or understanding of the environmental and economic situation in the study site. Since the sustainability report card contained technical questions, conducting an accompanying

interview would allow the interviewees better understanding of the questions such that they could provide the appropriate responses. The following are the agencies and/or individuals identified for interviews:

a. Tan-awan Oslob Sea Wardens and Fishermen's Association (TOSWFA)
b. Local Government Unit in Oslob, Cebu
c. Large Marine Vertebrates (LAMAVE) Research Institute Philippines
d. Accommodation Establishment (Association of homestays in Tan-awan, Oslob)

V. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the data collected from the interviews, sustainability report card, and observations of the researchers from Oslob, Cebu are presented and analyzed. In order to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of the study, quantitative and qualitative data on whale-shark watching in Oslob, Cebu were collected four representatives of key stakeholders in the research area.

For the first part of the chapter, Oslob, Cebu as whale-shark watching site will be discussed. In this section, a brief assessment based on the researcher's observations and related tourism information on whale-shark watching in the study site will be provided. In the assessment, basic information such as the prices for whale-shark watching activities, accommodations, accessibility of the tourism site, and conduct of the whale-shark watching activities will be included for analysis. In addition, economic data on the local government and community will be provided and discussed. By providing an initial assessment of the study site, data generated from the interviews and/or sustainability report card may be examined with a better background of whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu.

On the other hand, in the second section of the chapter, a holistic understanding of the current situation of whale-shark watching in Oslob, Cebu will be generated through key stakeholders who are directly involved and/or have strong interests in the said tourism activity who were interviewed and/or surveyed with the use of the sustainability report card developed for the research. As the sustainability report card contains specific guiding questions on different areas and indicators related to whale-shark watching activities, it was utilized as both a scoring system and interview form to guide the data collection process.

Due to the limitations on the collection of data, key representatives from the following stakeholders were chosen for the study:

1. Local Government Unit in Oslob, Cebu – Mayor Ronald Guaren
2. Tan-awan Oslob Sea Wardens and Fishermen's Association (TOSWFA) – Rutherford Friolo
3. Large Marine Vertebrates (LAMAVE) Research Institute Philippines – Joe and Emer
4. Accommodation Establishment (Association of homestays in Tan-awan, Oslob) – Veneranda Hescock

A. OSLOB, CEBU AS A WHALE-SHARK WATCHING SITE

The whale-shark watching site in Oslob, Cebu is primarily a tourist site. In terms of accessibility, the municipality is located in a strategic location which can be easily reached by provincial buses originating from Cebu City and Liloan Port. Since the road used by the said buses directly pass by the whale-shark watching site, resorts, and guesthouses, it is not difficult for tourists to find their way in Tan-awan, Oslob.

In terms of accommodations, there are a variety of choices to suit the budget of travelers to the area. Surprisingly, as a tourist site, the town of Tan-awan in Oslob, Cebu is quiet while the surrounding environment such that garbage and/or pollution are not visible. Furthermore, the town's coasts and waters are equally clean with little signs of wastes.

While the area is still relatively new compared to another whale-shark watching site in the Philippines, policies and pricing mechanisms which guide the whale-shark watching activities has been established by the local government unit. For example, Regulation No. 296, Ordinance No. 091:s-'12 which contains guidelines for whale-shark watching has been passed by the local government (Craven 2012). Inclusions in the Regulation No. 296, Ordinance No. 091:s-'12 specific to the conduct of the whale-shark watching activities are the following:

1. Only authorized tour guides from the accredited association, organization and/or cooperative shall be allowed to ferry a tourist/whale shark watcher for the purpose of whale-shark watching.
2. Only manual boat shall be allowed to enter the designated demarcated area for whale-shark watching. Motorboat is strictly prohibited.
3. No riding, touching using hands, feet, camera or pointer on whale sharks
4. No staying within five meters beside or behind the caudal or tail fin of the whale-sharks.
5. No staying within two meters in front of the whale-sharks' mouth during feeding.
6. Heavy splashing is prohibited.
7. A maximum of six tourists/whale shark watchers per whale shark shall be allowed to view for about thirty minutes
8. To avoid crowding, a maximum of scuba divers is limited to four divers per shark only.
9. No feeding on whale sharks shall be allowed except those who are authorized under this Ordinance.

Based on the above inclusions, actual participation in the whale-shark watching activities should actually be limited to a certain distance and the natural behavior of the whale-sharks should not be disturbed due to various limitations such as the use of boats and number of people which are allowed to enter the whale-shark watching site. However, while there are ordinances and other guidelines for the whale-shark watching activities, there still remains numerous issues based on the observations of the researcher upon participation in the said tourism activity.

Prior to the conduct of whale-shark watching activities, there are various steps which are taken by the fishermen of the Tan-awan Oslob Sea Warden and Fishermen's

Association (TOSWFA), members of the local community and/or local government, and tourists. First, the whale-shark watching activities are only held from six in the morning to twelve noon. Before the actual start, the fishermen start luring and/or feeding whale-sharks into the designated whale-watching area. On the other hand, tourists are required to register and partake in the orientation which provides information about actions which are prohibited and safety regulations for both the participants and whale-sharks. Notably, a member of the local tourism office holds the orientation within ten to fifteen minutes but, does not open the floor for tourists' questions. Afterwards, the tourists are directed towards the payment counters wherein there are significantly different rates for local community members, foreign tourists, and Philippine Nationals. Finally, the tourists are allowed to ride a paddle boat to the whale-shark watching area accompanied by two fishermen for thirty minutes.

Table 5: Fees/Charges for Individuals who will watch from Designated Whale-Watching Areas

LOCAL RESIDENT OF OSLOB, CEBU	
1. BELOW 12 YEARS OF AGE	₱ 15.00 / $0.34
2. ADULT	₱ 30.00 / $0.67
ADDITIONAL FEES:	
1. SNORKELING	₱ 20.00 / $0.45
2. DIVING	₱ 50.00 / $1.12
FILIPINO RESIDENT (PHILIPPINE-NATIONAL)	₱ 300.00 / $6.70
ADDITIONAL FEES:	
1. SNORKELING	₱ 200.00 / $ 4.47
2. DIVING	₱ 300.00 / $ 6.70
FOREIGNER	₱ 500.00 / $ 11.17
ADDITIONAL FEES:	
1. SNORKELING	₱ 500.00 / $ 11.17
2. DIVING	₱ 1000.00 / $ 22.34

* PHP-USD Conversion Rates was at 1PHP:0.022USD (March 2015)

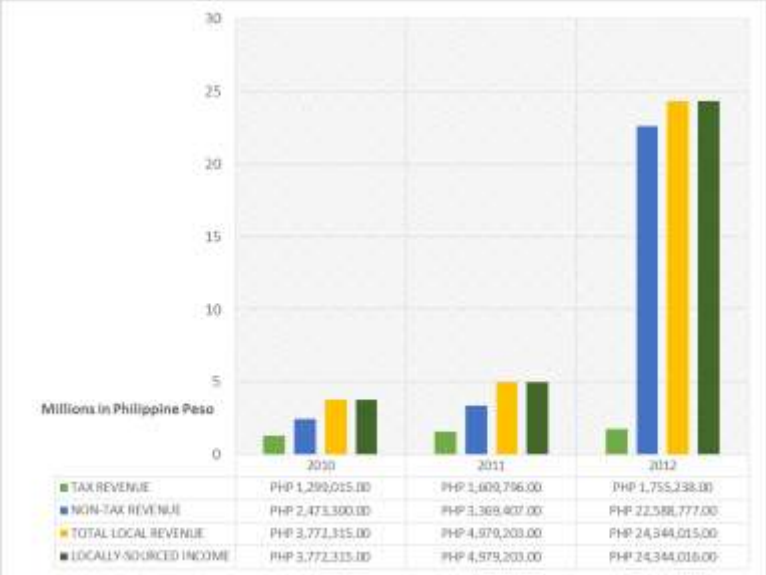
In the actual whale-shark watching area, the paddle boats form into a circular position while the feeding boats are situated inside the circle to lure the whale-sharks. Afterwards, the tourists are allowed into the waters with the supervision of the fishermen who accompanied them. During the limited period of whale-shark interaction, some tourists are

allowed to freely swim around and/or follow the whale-sharks while other tourists opt to stay on the boats. Contrary to the established regulations, the fishermen and tourists are not able to maintain the stated distance of two to five meters from the whale-sharks. Since the feeding boat moves around the designated whale-shark watching area, the whale-sharks also follow the boat around such that the tourists are able to maintain very close proximity with the said animals. Furthermore, the fishermen would encourage the tourists to get in close distance with the whale-sharks such that good photographs can be taken. Hence, there were occasions wherein tourists were in contact with the whales, accidentally or intentionally. Finally, there were several tourists who were quite stubborn and aggressive such that they would actively chase around the whale-sharks and try to divert its attention. Although the fishermen were trying to control the tourists' behavior, there was little effect on minimizing the disturbances caused by the said tourists. Based on the said observations, it was assumed that the implementation of rules and/or regulations were not strictly implemented leading to various violations in the ordinance.

B. ECONOMIC INDICATORS FOR THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY OF OSLOB, CEBU

Following the regulation of whale-shark watching activities in Oslob, Cebu, there was a surge in economic growth at Oslob, Cebu. In a fiscal sustainability scorecard produced by the Philippines' Department of Finance, the local government of Oslob received low scores in terms of fiscal sustainability from 2010-2011. However, in 2012, the local government experienced a sudden increase in local revenue and locally-sourced income which was assumed to be largely attributed to the measures taken by the local government to regulate and manage a certain portion of the whale-shark watching activities.

Figure 3: Local Revenue and Income of the Municipality of Oslob, Cebu 2010-2012 (Department of Finance 2014)

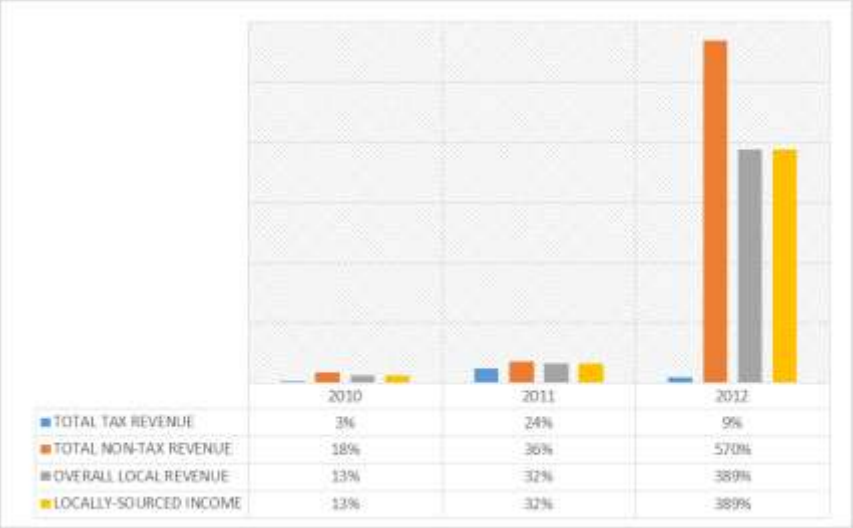


Considering that non-tax revenue can be broken down into regulatory fees, user/service charges, and economic enterprise, it can be assumed that the local government unit has enjoyed high economic returns from their regulatory measures and user/service charges in the management of the whale-shark watching activities. For example, an income-sharing mechanism has allowed the local government to receive 30% of the revenue generated from the whale-shark watching activities due to their management of the whale-shark watching activities.

Figure 4: Non-Tax Revenue of the Municipality of Oslob, Cebu 2010-2012 (Department of Finance 2014)

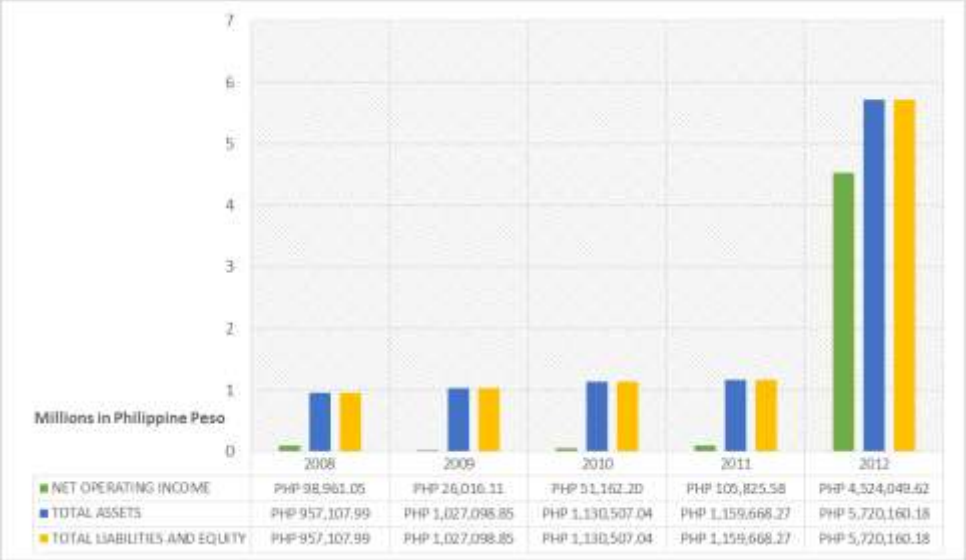
Based on the year-over-year assessments conducted by the Department of Finance, the financial performance of Oslob, Cebu has greatly improved. As expected, the financial growth can be mainly attributed to non-tax revenue which grew to 570%. According to the data provided, even with minimal tax revenue and/or government-budget allocations to the local government, Oslob can still be kept afloat by the non-tax revenue which are generated from the whale-shark watching activities.

Figure 5: Municipality of Oslob's Performance (+/- YoY) for Local Revenue and Locally-Sourced Income 2010-2012 (Department of Finance 2014)



At the community level, residents of Barangay Tan-awan, which is the main whale-shark watching area, have been able to receive economic benefits which is visible through substantially higher levels of net operating income, total assets, total liabilities and equities in 2012 (Ambayec et. al. 2014). Following the timeline of the whale-shark watching activities, increase in income, assets, and liabilities can indicate that the said tourism activities are the key causes for the sudden growth in the finances of local residents.

Figure 6: Comparative Balance Sheet of Barangay Tan-awan, Oslob 2008-2012 (Ambayac et. al. 2014)



Clearly, economic data at the community level exhibited similar trends to the previously discussed economic data on the local government. Interestingly, the rise of economic benefits for the local government and community did not occur at a gradual pace but rather, within an abrupt time span. Considering the fiscal sustainability report of the country's Department of Finance, it can be assumed that the increasing trend of economic gains continue along with the increase of tourists and/or visitors to the area.

C. SUSTAINABILITY REPORT CARDS

1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT IN OSLOB, CEBU

ECOLOGICAL

In terms of ecological sustainability, the Mayor Ronald Guaren of Oslob, Cebu ranked the indicators in the said area as highly sustainable. In the interview with the mayor of Oslob, Cebu, it was explained that the local government unit has enacted an ordinance to designate the whale-shark watching site as an ecological area. In terms of maintenance and protection of the local ecosystems, the Tan-awan Oslob Whale Shark Wardens and

Fishermen's Association (TOSWFA) serves as the main body in monitoring and/or protecting the local ecosystems and whale-sharks from visitors and natural elements. Furthermore, it was emphasized that the local government is very strict in preventing pollution in the area as it would negatively affect the whale-sharks.

On the conduct of whale-shark watching activities, the mayor explained that the ordinances which were enacted were based on the recommendations of the marine biologists who studied the whale-sharks in Oslob, Cebu. In addition, tourists and/or visitors who participate in the whale-shark watching activities are required to join a brief orientation on whale-shark watching prior to the actual activity. Finally, whale-shark watching activities have an operation limit wherein tourism activities in the designated whale-shark watching area is limited from six in the morning to twelve noon for the purpose of allowing the whale-sharks to relax and find feed on their own.

The mayor of Oslob, Cebu explains that from their perspective visible behavioral changes cannot be found in the whale-sharks since the visiting whale-sharks are observed to vary from day-to-day. Furthermore, as there are no baseline and/or preexisting data on the number of whale-sharks which visit the area, it is difficult to conclude on the increase and/or decrease the number of whale-sharks visiting Oslob, Cebu.

ECONOMIC

In terms of economic benefits to the local residents and/or *barangay* of Tan-awan in Oslob, Mayor Guaren also ranked the economic indicators as highly sustainable. In terms of employment opportunities, income, and outside/foreign investments, the local government of Oslob stated that there is an increasing trend with the increase of tourists and new establishments such as small restaurants.

Furthermore, Mayor Guaren has explained that the whale-shark watching site is very accessible compared to other whale-shark watching sites in the Philippines for several reasons such as there are various forms of transportation which can be utilized and the shoreline is 30-meters from the road. In terms of accommodation options, the local government unit gave a moderate score with the explanation that the accommodation would depend on the financial capacity of the tourists and/or visitors.

On the operation of whale-shark watching activities, the local government unit has regulated business practices and has involved itself in the formation of associations. In addition, there is an established revenue-sharing scheme among the stakeholders directly involved the whale-shark watching activities.

Table 6: Income-Sharing Schemes (Resolution No. 296, Enacting Ordinance No. 091 - January 6, 2012)

PERCENTAGE OF INCOME	AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL
60% of Income	Accredited Association Or Cooperative
30% of Income	Municipality (General Fund)
10% of Income	Barangay (General Fund)

SOCIAL

Similar to the previous areas, the mayor of Oslob, Cebu also scored the social indicators as highly sustainable. In terms of appreciation for the whale-sharks, the local government unit explain that prior to the whale-shark watching activities, the local residents would hurt and/or kill the whale-sharks as they disrupted the local's fishing activities. However, with the start of the tourism activities, the local residents have increasingly appreciated the presence of whale-sharks in the area.

With the increase of economic gains and number of tourists, the mayor assumes that the whale-shark watching activities generate high levels of enjoyment for both the locals and visitors.

When the whale-shark watching activities unofficially started around October 2011, there were three different fishermen associations which conducted the said activities separately. As there were three different groups competing, there was some conflict among the groups. In January 2012, the three groups were combined and the Tan-awan Oslob Whale Shark Wardens and Fishermen's Association (TOSWFA) was formally organized with the intervention of the local government of Oslob. As a result, the whale-shark watching activities became more organized and systematic. Furthermore, the local government units holds training activities on how to handle the tourism in the area.

POLITICAL

The mayor of Oslob, Cebu also ranked the political and/or governance indicators as highly sustainable. Notably, Mayor Guaren has claimed that without the local government's leadership in the regulation of the whale-shark watching activities, conflict within the local community would have remained. In terms of policies and/or regulations and their implementation, it was explained that there have been amendments to regulations as well as an increase in the fees for the whale-shark watching activities in order to regulate and protect the whale-sharks. In addition, diving shops are also required to be accredited. In cases wherein there are any violations by the diving shops, the accreditation will be revoked.

In terms of relations with other stakeholder groups, Mayor Guaren explains that there is a management board which includes the representatives of each stakeholder group. In addition, as mentioned earlier, there is an existing revenue-sharing scheme which the local government unit manages and maintains transparency through the issuance of receipts.

Table 7: Sustainability Report Card Results from the Local Government Unit in Oslob, Cebu

TOTAL FOR KEY AREAS/TYPOLOGY	OSLOB LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT SCORING RESULTS
ECOLOGICAL	28
ECONOMIC	26
SOCIAL	20
POLITICAL	20
OVERALL TOTAL	94
PERCENTAGE SCORE (TOTAL/100 X 100)	94

While the mayor of Oslob was quite accommodating in answering the questions, there was also a brief expression on his aversion for environmentalists. Since the whale-shark watching activities remain a controversial issue, the mayor explained that he would like to avoid conflict and/or protests from the environmentalists. Based on the said behavior, it can be assumed that the local government may hold a larger stake and/or interests over the whale-shark watching activities. Considering the local government's increased revenues and reliance on the whale-shark watching activities, it can be presumed that the said stakeholder would be more inclined to sustaining and further increasing the current economic benefits.

2. TAN-AWAN OSLOB SEA WARDEN AND FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION (TOSWFA)

ECOLOGICAL

For the ecological indicators, Rutherford Friolo, leader of the Tan-awan Oslob Sea Warden and Fishermen's Association (TOSWFA), ranked the said indicators as highly sustainable. In terms of ecological protection, conservation, and maintenance, there are ordinances and penalties for violations on marine life. Furthermore, the TOSFWA maintains its role as the area's *Bantay Dagat* (Sea Warden) by holding nighttime patrols

and preventing illegal fishing and/or cyanide fishing. Also, the organization also monitors and controls oil spills from large boats. In the case that there are any oil spills, the organization collects and disposes the oil in other area to protect the health of the whale-sharks and local ecosystems. In addition, there is also a Solid Waste Act in the area to regulate garbage disposal and segregation.

On the conduct of the whale-shark watching activities, the TOSWFA uses paddle boats and has designated roles among themselves. In TOSWFA, there are designated feeders which are in-charge of feeding the whale-sharks. However, as TOSWFA cannot control the movement of the whale-sharks, the whale-sharks can still hit the boats. Nonetheless, TOSFWA cooperates and follows the guidelines provided by the marine biologists. For example, in cases where the whale-sharks are found to be injured, TOSWFA informs the marine biologists so that the whale-sharks can be treated. In addition, the organization also follows the advice from the marine biologists on the tagging of the whale-sharks such that it can be easier to identify and/or track the whale-sharks which visit the area.

In terms of the behavioral changes and number of whale-sharks visiting Oslob, Cebu, Rutherford Friolo shared his personal observations. Based on his observations, there are some whale-sharks which stay for a month while there are other whale-sharks which return after a week. Since the whale-sharks are only visiting, migration of the said marine species is still maintained and/or continued as some whale-sharks return and some do not visit again. During the Habagat (southwest monsoon) season, there is a large number of whale-sharks visiting the area however, during the Amihan (northwest monsoon) season which is from October to December, there are quite few whale-sharks which visit the area. Finally, there are still fishermen which still conduct krill-fishing during nighttime to collect the feed for the whale-sharks and the fishermen have observed that there are still whale-sharks which

hunt for their food during that period which was similar to the behavior of whale-sharks prior to the beginning of the tourism activity.

ECONOMIC

Similar to the environmental indicators, Rutherford Friolo also scored the economic indicators as highly sustainable. In terms of economic opportunities and income of local residents, there is an increase of jobs as the local government unit assigns new staff to the area; increase of boatmen to TOSWFA; and more staff are hired at the resorts. In addition, there are outside investments which come in the form of new lodges and/or hotels. Nonetheless, there are still peak and off-seasons wherein there are more tourists from March to August while income goes down starting from September.

Tourism activities are also regulated and a revenue-sharing scheme exists among the stakeholders. According to Rutherford Friolo, the revenue-sharing scheme is fair and that there are partnerships with other stakeholders. In the scenario that there is an issue and/or incident to be resolved, stakeholder meetings are held.

On Tan-awan, Oslob as a tourism site, Rutherford Friolo explain that the room rates of some hotels did not differ after the whale-shark watching activities started. Furthermore, the cost of accommodations and/or other amenities is not different from other tourist sites in the Philippines. Finally, in terms of accessibility, the area is very accessible as there are several transportation choices.

SOCIAL

Rutherford Friolo ranked the social indicators to be highly sustainable. In terms of appreciation and increased learning of the locals, there are local government programs on marine awareness and stakeholder meetings on coastal awareness. In addition, there are changes in the community's behavior in order to adapt to the presence of tourists. While

the local residents enjoy the whale-shark watching activities and other tourism activities, there are also risks such as safety issues as the area is sometimes crowded and the two-lane roads become one-lane roads such that vehicular accidents can occur.

In terms of community solidarity and social equity, there is increased cooperation with increased communication among stakeholders. Furthermore, TOSWFA maintains its organization's bylaws to hire only Tan-awan residents as boatmen and/or members of the organization. Nonetheless, prior to the creation of TOSWFA, there were three associations which had members from neighboring *barangays.* Upon the creation of TOSWFA, the organization maintained the membership of the residents from neighboring areas. Currently, entry and/or membership into TOSWFA is limited to the residents of the area as the organization.

POLITICAL

Finally, for political indicators, Rutherford Friolo also rated the said indicators as highly sustainable. In terms of policies regarding the whale-shark watching activities and its implementation, the local government unit does its role properly. In addition, there are permits and accreditations for the operators. On the matter of the fee-collection and revenue-sharing scheme, both TOSWFA and the local government unit are transparent and follow the regulations of the Commission on Audit (COA).

In addition, it was mentioned by Rutherford Friolo, that there are monthly inspections and meetings with the local government unit and other government bodies such as the Coast Guard and Philippine National Police (PNP) in preparation for the APEC meetings and/or delegations.

Table 8: Sustainability Report Card Results from Tan-awan Oslob Sea Wardens and Fishermen's Association (TOSWFA)

TOTAL FOR KEY AREAS/TYPOLOGY	TOSFWA SCORING RESULTS
ECOLOGICAL	29
ECONOMIC	28
SOCIAL	19
POLITICAL	20
OVERALL TOTAL	96
PERCENTAGE SCORE (TOTAL/100 X 100)	96

In the case of TOSFWA, there were more difficulties in being granted an interview with either the leader or members of the association. Based on the researcher's observations, there was an implicit control over the interviews with the TOSWFA members. Although there was a prior request for an interview with the leader of TOSWFA, Rutherford Friolo, through the local government's tourism office, the request was not transmitted accordingly such that there were difficulties in conducting the interview. Furthermore, the leader of TOSWFA also expressed that he would not be granting an interview with no official approval from the local government. Based on the said exchanges, it was assumed that there is a level of cooperation between the local government and TOSWFA to limit their statements to protect their economic interests from certain stakeholder groups which may discredit the whale-shark watching activities.

3. ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENT (ASSOCIATION OF HOMESTAYS IN TAN-AWAN, OSLOB)

ECOLOGICAL

In terms of ecological indicators, Veneranda Hescock, a member of the Accommodation Establishment (Association of Homestays in Tan-awan), gave a moderately sustainable score on the ecological area in Oslob, Cebu. Since there is a strict fishing ban on the whale-shark watching zone, Veneranda Hescock has observed that there

has been an increased presence of tropical fishes in the area. However, Veneranda Hescock observed that there seems to be an increase in pollution and/or garbage in the area after the tourism started. Furthermore, it is not clear whether there is a recycling or proper waste disposal system.

On the conduct of whale-shark watching activities, Veneranda Hescock noted that while the infrastructure, boats, and other tools used in the whale-shark watching activities do not generate disturbance for the whale-sharks, the visitors and/or tourists are make a lot of noise particularly when they are startled by the whale-sharks. In addition, Veneranda Hescock explained that while the whale-shark watching activities and operators are regulated, there are no specific rules and/or regulations for the resorts and homestays.

In terms of changes in behavior and number of the whale-sharks, from the perspective of the member of the association who is a local resident of Oslob, Cebu, there are no changes in the whale-sharks' behavior. Prior to the start of whale-shark activities in the area, whale-sharks have been visiting the area for a long time and are said to follow the fishermen in their boats during their fishing periods. As a result, it is difficult to state if there are any changes in the number of whale-sharks visiting the area.

ECONOMIC

For the economic indicators, Veneranda Hescock scored the said indicators as moderately sustainable. In terms of economic opportunities and income, the local residents and outsiders have largely benefited from the whale-shark watching activities. For the municipality and TOSWFA, there has been a high stream of income for both parties particularly during peak seasons. As a result there has been a lot of movement of residents from neighboring *barangays* to Tan-awan, Oslob. Notably, there have been a lot of former

and/or local residents who returned to the area from Manila and other countries to start their own businesses in the area.

Nonetheless, Veneranda Hescock mentioned that there are certain uncertainties and/or set-backs with the growth of the tourism in the area. In the cases of typhoons and/or high tides, it is difficult to hold whale-shark watching activities such that there is no income for the boatmen during the said periods. Furthermore, in addition to fishing restrictions in the whale-shark watching zone, the conduct of whale-shark watching activities take much of the boatmen's effort and time such that fishing activities are no longer held. As a result, the local residents purchase their fishes and/or food from other municipalities at a higher price. In addition, feed for the whale-sharks are mostly imported from neighboring island-provinces.

Veneranda Hescock made several observations in terms of the tourism and/or business practices in the area. On the revenue-sharing and business practices in the area, the member of the association explained that there is an income-sharing scheme with official receipts and which undergoes legal audits. In the case of accommodations, there are several options which can be taken by visitors such as homestays which are cheap and resorts that are expensive. Finally, there are various transportation options and/or routes from Cebu City and neighboring island-province, Dumaguete, which can be taken to reach the whale-shark watching area.

SOCIAL

Veneranda Hescock, from the Association Establishment, ranked the social indicators as highly sustainable. In terms of appreciation, knowledge and/or learning, and enjoyment from the environment and whale-shark watching activities, the member of the association observed an improvement among the local residents. Furthermore, she explained that with

the implementation of the current ordinances and associations, there was a disappearance of conflict which existed prior to the regulation of the whale-shark watching activities.

Nonetheless, Veneranda Hescock noted that with the increased incomes of the local residents, the community gained access to drugs, alcohol, and other negative vices.

POLITICAL

For the political indicators, Veneranda Hescock similarly provided a highly sustainable score for the efforts of the local government units in regulating the whale-shark watching activities. There are existing fishing regulations which are implemented by the *Bantay Dagat* (Sea Wardens) and there are required licenses for diving shops and instructors. Furthermore, the local government unit is strict in implementing the tax regulations of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

Finally, the local government unit also holds regular and/or monthly meetings with the associations. In addition, the local government unit also holds joint meetings with the stakeholder groups if there are any issues and new regulations.

Table 9: Sustainability Report Card Results from Accommodation Establishment (Association of Homestays in Tan-awan, Oslob)

TOTAL FOR KEY AREAS/TYPOLOGY	HOMESTAY SCORING RESULTS
ECOLOGICAL	17
ECONOMIC	24
SOCIAL	19
POLITICAL	20
OVERALL TOTAL	80
PERCENTAGE SCORE (TOTAL/100 X 100)	80

Unlike the previous stakeholders, Veneranda Hescock did not exhibit any explicit and/or implicit reluctance to participate in the interview. However, based on the responses

to the interview questions, there seems to be minimal interaction between the representative of Accommodation Establishment and other stakeholder groups.

4. LARGE MARINE VERTEBRATES (LAMAVE) RESEARCH INSTITUTE PHILIPPINES

In the case of LAMAVE, Joe and Emer, who were the representatives of the organization, had reservations in answering the questions regarding the social and political conditions of the community in Oslob, Cebu. Since the organization is primarily focused on scientific and ecological research, the representatives explained that they are not well-aware of the social and political activities of the local community and the local government units. Furthermore, the representatives explained that the organization would like to maintain their relationship with the local community members and local government unit. Hence, the representatives of LAMAVE only answered specific questions relating to the ecological and economic conditions in Oslob, Cebu.

ECOLOGICAL

Compared to other stakeholders, the representatives of LAMAVE gave low scores on the ecological indicators. Regarding the location of the whale-shark watching site, the representatives stated that area is not considered as a marine protected area (MPA) and that the whale-shark interaction area is the only place which is controlled through existing fishing rules. Furthermore, they explained that the whale-shark watching site is not a conservation site. Nonetheless, as a tourist site, the representatives observed that the similar problems in other tourist sites occur in Oslob, Cebu. Finally, in terms of waste-management, the representatives of LAMAVE explained that the area is relatively clean and that pollution in the waters actually depend on the current such that it cannot be identified that

the garbage and/or wastes originate from Oslob, Cebu. Furthermore, LAMAVE has not observed run-off of wastes to the sea which originates from the local community.

In terms of infrastructures, boats, and other related tools utilized in whale-shark watching, the representatives of LAMAVE also observed that the paddle boats which are used do not generate any disturbance to the whale-sharks. On the other hand, LAMAVE representatives did not comment on the activities conducted by whale-shark operators and/or fishermen since they wish to maintain their position as a neutral body.

Finally, the representatives stated that LAMAVE has been able to tag 200 new whale-sharks since they started monitoring the area. However, due to the lack of baseline data, it is difficult to assume whether there has been an increase or decrease in whale-sharks visiting Oslob, Cebu. Lastly, the representatives explained that research on whale-sharks take long periods such that it is also difficult to conclude whether there have been any behavioral changes in the whale-sharks.

ECONOMIC

In terms of economic benefits, the representatives of LAMAVE noted that the local community largely gained in terms of employment opportunities and income. Furthermore, they were able to observe that new establishments would start business quite often. However, one of the representatives of LAMAVE who was also assigned to another whale-shark watching area (Donsol) in the Philippines explained that in comparison to Donsol, establishments in Oslob are not as well-planned.

Table 10: Sustainability Report Card Results from the Large Marine Vertebrates (LAMAVE) Research Institute Philippines

TOTAL FOR KEY AREAS/TYPOLOGY	LAMAVE (TENTATIVE) SCORING RESULTS
ECOLOGICAL	9
ECONOMIC	14

SOCIAL	N/A
POLITICAL	N/A
OVERALL TOTAL	23
PERCENTAGE SCORE (TOTAL/100 X 100)	23

D. OVERALL STAKEHOLDER RESULTS

Interestingly, the responses from each stakeholder representative had numerous similarities. While there were some conflicting responses, the said issues were minimal such that the overall total scores reflected high level of sustainability in terms of stakeholder perception. However, it should be highlighted that due to the limited responses of LAMAVE's representatives, their scores were not included in the overall stakeholder results.

ECOLOGICAL

For the ecological indicators, representatives from both the local government unit in Oslob and TOSWFA rated the whale-shark watching activities and other related environmental activities and/or conservation as highly sustainable. On the other hand, the representative from the Accommodation Establishment gave a moderate score citing issues of pollution along the coastline of the town.

In evaluating the responses of the representatives of the local government unit and TOSWFA, it should be noted that the said stakeholder groups are the ones mainly involved in the management of whale-shark watching activities. Both of the representatives are also well-aware of the presence of marine biologists and/or environmental NGOs in the area such that both representatives continuously emphasized their cooperation with the said groups. Furthermore, both representatives highlighted the strict implementation of regulations and/or guidelines in the whale-shark watching area. In several aspects, there were a lot of parallelism in the responses of the two representatives.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that while the local government and TOSWFA have expressed their appreciation for the marine biologists and/or environmental NGOs, there seems to be an absence of communication lines between the three stakeholder groups. Furthermore, the environmental NGOs do not play an active role in the actual whale-shark watching activities despite their criticisms of the said activities. Currently, there are actual problems in the imposition and/or maintenance of rules and regulations in the whale-shark interaction area however, LAMAVE does not participate in the said activities, due to various reasons, such that it would be difficult to monitor and correct the issues.

On the other hand, the representative from Accommodation Establishment also supported several statements of the local government unit and TOSWFA representatives such as the minimal disturbance caused by the paddle boats. However, she highlighted the issue of increase pollution and/or garbage which was contrary to the statements of previous two representatives.

ECONOMIC

For the economic indicators, there was a similar pattern in the representatives' answers wherein the local government unit and TOSWFA representative scored the whale-shark watching activities as highly sustainable due to the increased economic benefits. On the other hand, the representative from Accommodation Establishment cited critical issues which led to a moderate sustainability rating.

As explained by the representatives of the local government unit and TOSWFA, there was increased employment opportunities and income primarily for the local residents. Furthermore, there was increased investments through the creation of resorts in the area. Notably, there was also a clear income-sharing scheme which is supported by all the stakeholders involved. While the representative from Accommodation Establishment also

reiterated these statements, it was highlighted that there was increased dependence on the whale-shark watching activities such that the fishermen's only source of income is based on the said activities. Considering the volatile climate conditions, there were situations wherein the fishermen are unable to conduct the whale-shark watching activities due to low visibility. Furthermore, there are also off-seasons due to decreased visits of whale-sharks associated with monsoon seasons. Hence, the fishermen and other local residents whose income are reliant on the tourism activities are negatively affected.

SOCIAL

In terms of social indicators, the three representatives similarly scored the said area as highly sustainable. As a result of the ordinance and intervention of the local government, there was reduced conflict due to the regulation of whale-shark watching activities. Furthermore, as the whale-shark watching activities are the main income source, the local residents developed increased appreciation for the whale-sharks in the area.

Nonetheless, it should be considered that while competition and/or conflict has been reduced within the town of Tan-awan, Oslob, there may be increased conflict with neighboring towns and municipalities. As majority of the economic benefits are isolated to the local residents of Tan-wan, other towns and municipalities have not experienced any spill-over benefits from the tourism activities. Furthermore, membership into TOSWFA is currently limited to the local residents of Tan-awan such that employment opportunities have also not increased for fishermen in neighboring towns and municipalities. Furthermore, there has been news accounts wherein neighboring towns have been complaining that whale-sharks have been sighted and are disturbing fishing activities near their coastlines. As a result, the town of Tan-awan may experience criticism and/or conflict

due to the lack of spillover benefits and continuous containment of economic benefits to the local community members.

POLITICAL

In terms of political indicators, the three stakeholder representatives scored the performance of the local government unit as highly sustainable. One of the most interesting characteristics of the political intervention, which contributed to the high scoring, may be attributed to the element of participatory governance in terms of decision-making and consultations. Prior to the local government's intervention in the whale-shark watching activities, there were three fishermen groups competing to attract more tourists and earn more money which generated discord in the local community. In the scenario wherein the local government did not mediate for the conflicting groups of fishermen and regulated the whale-shark watching activities, more unsustainable outcomes could have occurred with the lack of regulations and increased competition.

Currently, through the leadership of the local government, there is more cooperation and solidarity among the various stakeholder groups. One of the primary mechanisms which facilitated participatory governance in the area are the regular stakeholder meetings wherein certain issues are identified for resolution. During the said meetings, stakeholder groups are consulted and included in the resolution of various issues which plague the whale-shark watching activities and local community. In addition, there is an income-sharing scheme mainly handled by the local government unit and does not seem to have any issues and was considered fair by stakeholders involved. Notably, the representative of TOSWFA mentioned that the overall income-sharing mechanism has remained transparent with the receipts and/or records of the whale-shark watching activities made public for the stakeholders involved. As the income-sharing scheme is straight-forward and transparent,

it can be assumed that the said mechanism has contributed to maintaining solidarity and trust among the stakeholders.

Table 11: Overall Stakeholder Results of the Sustainability Report Cards

TOTAL FOR KEY AREAS/TYPOLOGY	OVERALL STAKEHOLDER SCORING RESULTS
ECOLOGICAL	**24.67**
ECONOMIC	**26**
SOCIAL	**19.33**
POLITICAL	**20**
OVERALL TOTAL	**90**
PERCENTAGE SCORE (TOTAL/100 X 100)	**90**

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

Over the past decade, whale-shark watching sites in the Philippines has experienced a tourist boom which can be largely attributed to the said activity's unique characteristics which allows close interaction between the whale-sharks and visitors. Due to whale-shark watching activities, small towns which were formerly identified as the poorest areas in their respective regions enjoyed a sudden spike in economic benefits. Through the continued growth of tourist numbers to the whale-shark watching sites, employment opportunities and incomes have increased. Nonetheless, while there has been some visible socio-economic gains, there has been an ethical debate surrounding the whale-shark watching activities due to its potential impacts to the whale-sharks breeding and feeding behavior.

In the case of Oslob, Cebu, there was a significant increase in incomes and assets after the whale-shark watching activities in 2012. According to the economic data, the local government and community experienced a dramatic increase in incomes and/or revenue during the first year after the whale-shark watching activities. Based on the survey results and analyses, residents of Oslob, Cebu reaped economic benefits through increased incomes and employment opportunities. As the result of the influx of investments, in the form of tourist accommodations such as resorts and guesthouses, local residents were provided with various forms of employment opportunities. Furthermore, there has been a trend of returning residents from other cities and countries as a result of investment opportunities in the whale-shark watching industry.

Nonetheless, with the shift of employment and investments to the whale-shark watching industry, the municipality of Oslob, Cebu still suffers some losses due to the characteristics of the whale-shark watching activities. Considering that the whale-shark watching activities can

be identified as a seasonal tourism activity due to the migration patterns of whale-sharks, incomes of residents and establishments in the area are irregular and highly dependent on the whale-shark sightings. Due to the schedule of whale-shark watching activities, fishermen have been unable to continue regular fishing activities. Hence, the municipality has become reliant on imports of seafood and fish bait from other municipalities and provinces. With the combination of seasonal whale-shark watching activities and reduced fishing, the fishermen of Oslob, Cebu faces the most risk in terms of income losses if the whale-shark watching activities are not carefully monitored and evaluated for sustainable practices.

Another interesting characteristic of the whale-shark watching activities is the promotion of participatory governance in the local community. Although there was a significant level of political intervention in the regulation of whale-shark watching, the community was able to appreciate the changes which were carried by the local government. With the creation of a more organized whale-shark watching association, there was a reduction of competition and conflict within the community. In addition, regular stakeholder meetings encouraged communication and cooperation in the resolution of issues present in the area. Furthermore, the regulation of the tourist prices reduced the possibility of cheating the tourists which could negatively impact the reputation of the local community. Lastly, the introduction of an income-sharing mechanism allowed for increased transparency and trust among the stakeholders. While political intervention in economic activities could lead to lower levels of trust between community members and government institutions, participatory governance in the case of Oslob, Cebu has allowed for increased cooperation and communication between the local government and community.

Although the local government community has achieved a certain level of participatory governance, there are still notable issues which may have long-term effects on the local government and community include their relationships with neighboring towns and the

environmental NGOs. As mentioned earlier, positive economic spillovers have not reached the surrounding areas and there is a restriction in the membership system of the Tan-awan Oslob Sea Warden and Fishermen's Association. While the neighboring towns have tries to attract the whale-sharks to their coastlines, there has been little success to carry out whale-shark watching tourism.

On the other hand, the local government and community's relationship with the environmental NGOs have remained in a grey area. In the case of the environmental NGOs, the said stakeholders have opted to maintain monitoring activities on purely ecological grounds to avoid conflict with the local community. Although the environmental NGOs have claimed their doubts and disapproval of the whale-shark watching practices in Oslob, Cebu, the said NGOs have limited access to the actual conduct of the tourism activities. Although the environmental NGOs have provided guidelines on whale-shark interaction, the said stakeholders cannot verify if the proper procedures and limitations are being upheld during the interaction period. Due to the limitations, the environmental NGOs may be unable to evaluate the whale-shark watching interaction activities on ethical grounds. While the local government and TOSWFA have claimed to be accommodating to the suggestions of the environmental NGOs, their relationship seems to be quite limited considering the participatory governance mechanisms which was promoted by the local government to the other stakeholders.

Currently, research on the impacts of the increased interaction of tourists with the whale-sharks remain inconclusive. Hence, it is difficult to identify the long-term implications of the growing tourism industry on the whale-sharks' behavior. Nonetheless, the local government and stakeholders in Oslob, Cebu should resolve the current issues in the conduct of whale-shark watching activities as it can negatively impact tourism in the area. While there are established rules and regulations on the conduct of whale-shark watching activities, they have not been effectively implemented by the fishermen and/or TOSWFA.

Based on the observations from the whale-shark watching activities, there is a lack of check and balance in the monitoring and implementation of rules and regulations in the whale-shark watching activities. Since the stakeholders who are involved in the facilitation of the said activities are the same groups which are supposed to implement and report violations, an effective policing mechanism has not been observed. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that with a higher level of solidarity within the local community, members of the stakeholder groups have become less inclined to report fellow community members.

Moreover, the tourists have been identified as the main carrier and/or source of economic gains such that the local stakeholders would avoid damaging their relationships with visitors who could share their positive experiences from the whale-shark watching activities. As a result, tourists have been prone to violating the rules which are set to protect the whale-sharks since there are no penalties being imposed. Considering that the whale-shark watching activities are controlled by non-experts, dangers which may occur in the whale-shark watching area may not be deterred accordingly.

As mentioned earlier, whale-shark watching in Oslob, Cebu are widely discussed and controversial in various media and/or internet platforms due to the nature of the activity, tourists may be discouraged from visiting Oslob, Cebu if there are various accounts on wrong and/or unethical practices in the conduct of whale-shark watching activities. Hence, the local government of Oslob and TOSWFA should effectively implement and monitor the policies on whale-shark watching and interaction activities to avoid criticisms which could reduce and/or halt the growth of tourism in the area.

B. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In ensuring the sustainability of whale-shark watching activities, there would be a need for increased cooperation between the stakeholders in Oslob, Cebu, particularly on the side of

the environmental NGOs. Currently, the local government effectively facilitate meetings among the residential and fishermen associations to resolve issues which arose from the various tourism activities. However, there has been no effort to actively engage the environmental NGOs which could be valuable to ensuring the sustainability of whale-shark watching activities. Although the local government and TOSWFA have claimed to receive recommendations from the environmental NGOs, there is an absence of regular and/or official meetings which could facilitate knowledge sharing that would allow the various stakeholders to learn better practices on managing the whale-shark watching activities.

To effectively implement regulations on whale-shark watching activities, the local government should consider the inclusion of another monitoring party during the conduct of whale-shark watching activities. Presently, only the fishermen and/or members of TOSWFA are present and serve as the wardens in the interaction area and/or waters. Hence, there is no definite assurance that rules and regulations to protect the whale-sharks and tourists are being effectively implemented. Since the fishermen are also not inclined to reporting their own members and tourists for violations, there are no penalties being imposed to reduce the risks against whale-sharks and visitors. In order to resolve the said issue, the local government should consider a request for environmental NGOs to provide volunteers during the whale-shark watching hours as they are more educated and well-aware on the behavior of whale-sharks.

Also, the local government should consider the creation of monitoring indicators and mechanisms which can be utilized to regularly assess and evaluate the sustainability of whale-shark watching activities. Through cooperation with the environmental NGOs, the local government and TOSWFA should be able to produce relevant indicators which can be supplied with data collected by the stakeholders involved in the whale-shark watching activities. Since the tourism industry in Oslob, Cebu is relatively new, baseline data should be collected

immediately such that sustainability projections can be more efficiently produced in future studies.

With the continued growth of whale-shark watching tourism in Oslob, there are increased probabilities for tourist and operator violations of regulations which are set to protect both the whale-sharks and visitors. Although there is still insufficient scientific data to understand whale-shark behavior and the impacts of close-proximity whale-shark watching activities, it is highly necessary for the stakeholder groups to initiate and/or participate in definitive action to improve policing, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of whale-shark watching in Oslob, Cebu.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: WHALE-SHARK WATCHING SITE VISIT – SEPTEMBER 4, 2015

PRIOR TO THE START OF THE WHALE-SHARK WATCHING ACTIVITIES

WHALE-SHARK WATCHING ORIENTATION

WHALE-SHARK WATCHING INTERACTION AREA

WHALE-SHARK SIGHTINGS

APPENDIX B: SUSTAINABILITY REPORT CARD

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT CARD: WHALE-SHARK WATCHING IN OSLOB, CEBU

RESPONDENT and AGENCY:

DATE:

SCORING SYSTEM: 0 AS THE LOWEST/HIGHLY UNSUSTAINABLE – 4 AS THE HIGHEST/HIGHLY SUSTAINABLE

PLEASE REFER TO THE GUIDING CRITERIA AS THE BASIS FOR SCORING THE SPECIFIC SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS

KEY AREAS/TYPOLOGY	SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS	GUIDING CRITERIA FOR SCORING	SCORES (0-4)	EXPLANATION (IF AVAILABLE)
ECOLOGICAL	1. Location of whale- shark watching site	LOW: The whale-shark watching site not located in a key ecological area? HIGH: The whale-shark watching site located in a key ecological area?		
	2. Maintenance of local ecology/ecosystems	LOW: There are no measures to maintain the ecology/ecosystem. HIGH: There adequate measures to maintain the ecology/ecosystems after their exposure to people and other natural elements.		
	3. Conservation of whale-sharks and other wildlife species in the area	LOW: There are no conservation practices/measures in the area. HIGH: There are conservation practices to ensure the protection of whale-sharks and other wildlife.		
	4. Pollution and/or damage to the ecology/environment	LOW: Visitors, whale-shark watching operators, and fishermen generate large amounts of wastes. HIGH: Visitors, whale-shark watching operators, and fishermen generate small amounts of wastes.		

	5. Infrastructures, boats, and other related tools used in the whale-shark watching activities generate minimal disturbance to the whale-sharks and other wildlife species	LOW: Infrastructures, boats and other related tools generate a lot of disturbance for the natural environment and wildlife. HIGH: Infrastructures constructed to blend with the natural environment; Boats and other related tools do not generate noise which affect the natural behavior and environment of whale-sharks and other wildlife.		
	6. Whale-shark watching and/or interaction activities conducted by the whale-shark operators and/or fishermen follow the suggested guidelines provided by ecological groups and/or scientists	LOW: Whale-shark operators and/or fishermen conduct activities with no consideration for the whale-sharks, wildlife, and environment. HIGH: Whale-shark operators and/or fishermen follow the suggestions for improving the sustainability of the whale-shark watching activities.		
	7. Behavioral changes in the whale-sharks and wildlife	LOW: Vast changes in the behavior of the whale-sharks after continued interaction with the visitors and fishermen. HIGH: No behavioral changes in the whale-sharks even after continued interaction with the visitors and fishermen.		
	8. Number of whale- sharks visiting the area	LOW: Large decrease in number of whale-sharks visiting the area. HIGH: Continued increase in the number of whale-sharks visiting the area.		
ECONOMIC	1. Employment opportunities for local residents	LOW: No employment opportunities for the local residents after the start of the whale-shark watching activities. HIGH: Large increase and variation in employment opportunities for the local residents after the start of the whale-shark watching activities.		

	2. Income of local residents	LOW: Decrease in annual income of local residents after the start of the whale-shark watching activities. HIGH: Increase in the annual income of local residents after the start of the whale-shark watching activities.		
	3. Outside/Foreign investments to the municipality (in terms of ecotourism)	LOW: No outside/foreign investments made for the advancement of ecotourism in the area. HIGH: High number of outside/foreign investments in the development of ecotourism.		
	4. Revenue sharing between the stakeholders	LOW: Revenue-sharing benefits only one group of stakeholders. HIGH: Revenue-sharing is fair and highly beneficial for all stakeholder groups.		
	5. Business practices by whale-shark operators follows the basic principles of sustainable ecotourism	LOW: Business practices are unsustainable and inconsiderate of the whale-sharks, wildlife, and environment. HIGH: Business practices are well-researched, environmentally-friendly and sustainable.		
	6. Accommodations and/or amenities for both the local and international visitors	LOW: Accommodations are insufficient and/or expensive. HIGH: Accommodations are sufficient and inexpensive.		
	7. Accessibility of whale-shark watching site/area (local transportation)	LOW: Whale-shark watching site is located in an isolated area which is difficult and expensive to reach via public transportation. HIGH: Whale-shark watching site is located is very accessible with multiple means and/or channels of public transportation.		
SOCIAL	1. Appreciation by local residents and visitors for the environment/ecology and marine species	LOW: Local residents and visitors do not appreciate the environment/ecology after conducting and/or participating in whale-shark watching activities. HIGH: High level of appreciation by local residents and visitors after conducting and/or participating in whale-shark watching activities.		

	2. Knowledge/learning of local residents and visitors' on environmental/ecological issues	LOW: Local residents and visitors do not gain any new knowledge or information on environmental issues after conducting and/or participating in whale-shark watching activities. HIGH: Local residents and visitors gain an increased understanding for environmental issues after conducting and/or participating in whale-shark watching activities.		
	3. Contribution of whale-shark watching activity to the community's cultural value	LOW: Whale-shark watching activities do not contribute to the community's cultural value. HIGH: Whale-shark watching activities greatly contribute to the community's cultural value.		
	4. Provides enjoyment to both local residents and visitors	LOW: Whale-shark watching activities do not provide enjoyment and/or entertainment to local residents and visitors. HIGH: Whale-shark watching activities provide high levels of enjoyment and/or entertainment to local residents and visitors.		
	5. Contribution to local community's solidarity and social equity	LOW: Conflict and competition brought by whale-watching activities resulted to low-levels of solidarity and social equity in the local community. HIGH: Cooperation and collaboration among community members led to high levels of solidarity and social-equity in the local community.		
POLITICAL	1. Policies and/or regulations in the protection of the local ecology, whale-sharks, and other wildlife	LOW: No policies and/or regulations in the protection of the local ecology, whale-sharks, and other wildlife. HIGH: Policies and/or regulations are appropriate and sufficient for the protection the local ecology, whale-sharks, and other wildlife.		

	2. Implementation and/or enforcement of policies, regulations, and guidelines on whale-sharks watching and environmental protection	LOW: Polices and/or regulations are not publicized and neglected by local government units and related government agencies. HIGH: Policies and/or regulations are strictly implemented by the local government units and related government agencies.		
	3. Issuance of national permits, licenses, and accreditation for whale-shark watching operators, divers, and fishermen	LOW: National permits, licenses, and accreditation certificates are not required and/or issued by local government units and related government agencies. HIGH: National permits, licenses, and accreditation certificates are required and/or issued by local government units and related government agencies; National permits, licenses, and accreditation certificates are regularly monitored for updates.		
	4. Fee collection and income-sharing scheme	LOW: Fee collections and income-sharing schemes are neglected by the designated office in the local government unit. HIGH: Fee collections and income-sharing schemes are regularly monitored and implemented effectively.		
	5. Decision-making activities and/or management decisions include the participation of all stakeholder groups	LOW: Decision-making activities and/or management issues are exclusive for the local government units. HIGH: Participation of all stakeholder groups is encouraged and included in the final outputs of the decision-making activities and/or management decisions.		
TOTAL	MAX SCORE: 25 x 4 = 100			
PERCENTAGE SCORE	TOTAL/100 x 100			

APPENDIX C: ACCOMPLISHED SUSTAINABILITY REPORT CARD

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT CARD: WHALE-SHARK WATCHING IN OSLOB, CEBU

RESPONDENT and AGENCY: Mayor Ronald Guaren

DATE: Sept 3, 2015

SCORING SYSTEM: 0 AS THE LOWEST/HIGHLY UNSUSTAINABLE – 4 AS THE HIGHEST/HIGHLY SUSTAINABLE

PLEASE REFER TO THE GUIDING CRITERIA AS THE BASIS FOR SCORING THE SPECIFIC SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS

KEY AREAS/TYPOLOGY	SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS	GUIDING CRITERIA FOR SCORING	SCORES (0-4)	EXPLANATION (IF AVAILABLE)
ECOLOGICAL	1. Location of whale- shark watching site	LOW: The whale-shark watching site not located in a key ecological area? HIGH: The whale-shark watching site located in a key ecological area?	4	LGU enacted an ordinance - ecological area
	2. Maintenance of local ecology/ecosystems	LOW: There are no measures to maintain the ecology/ecosystem. HIGH: There adequate measures to maintain the ecology/ecosystems after their exposure to people and other natural elements.	4	fishermen protection Assoc.
	3. Conservation of whale-sharks and other wildlife species in the area	LOW: There are no conservation practices/measures in the area. HIGH: There are conservation practices to ensure the protection of whale-sharks and other wildlife.	4	Brief orientation Dos & Donts
	4. Pollution and/or damage to the ecology/environment	LOW: Visitors, whale-shark watching operators, and fishermen generate large amounts of wastes. HIGH: Visitors, whale-shark watching operators, and fishermen generate small amounts of wastes.	4	no pollution → very strict Pollution → whale-shark
	5. Infrastructures, boats, and other related tools used in the whale-shark watching activities generate minimal disturbance to the whale-sharks and other wildlife species	LOW: Infrastructures, boats and other related tools generate a lot of disturbance for the natural environment and wildlife. HIGH: Infrastructures constructed to blend with the natural environment; Boats and other related tools do not generate noise which affect the natural behavior and environment of whale-sharks and other wildlife.	4	operation limit 6 – 12 nm → give whale-shark time to relax & feed themselves

1

	6. Whale-shark watching and/or interaction activities conducted by the whale-shark operators and/or fishermen follow the suggested guidelines provided by ecological groups and/or scientists	LOW: Whale-shark operators and/or fishermen conduct activities with no consideration for the whale-sharks, wildlife, and environment. HIGH: Whale-shark operators and/or fishermen follow the suggestions for improving the sustainability of the whale-shark watching activities.	4	Ordinance is based on recommendations of marine biologists. - to incorporate in enactments
	7. Behavioral changes in the whale-sharks and wildlife	LOW: Vast changes in the behavior of the whale-sharks after continued interaction with the visitors and fishermen. HIGH: No behavioral changes in the whale-sharks even after continued interaction with the visitors and fishermen.	4	no behavioral changes - diff. whale-sharks - don't stay permanently
	8. Number of whale- sharks visiting the area	LOW: Large decrease in number of whale-sharks visiting the area. HIGH: Continued increase in the number of whale-sharks visiting the area.	N/A	No record - cannot say if there's increase
ECONOMIC	1. Employment opportunities for local residents	LOW: No employment opportunities for the local residents after the start of the whale-shark watching activities. HIGH: Large increase and variation in employment opportunities for the local residents after the start of the whale-shark watching activities.	4	Yes. 60% of income to local residents + establishments
	2. Income of local residents	LOW: Decrease in annual income of local residents after the start of the whale-shark watching activities. HIGH: Increase in the annual income of local residents after the start of the whale-shark watching activities.	4	Increase ↑ tourists ↑
	3. Outside/Foreign investments to the municipality (in terms of ecotourism)	LOW: No outside/foreign investments made for the advancement of ecotourism in the area. HIGH: High number of outside/foreign investments in the development of ecotourism.	4	Yes! Small restaurants + souvenir items

	4. Revenue sharing between the stakeholders	LOW: Revenue-sharing benefits only one group of stakeholders. HIGH: Revenue-sharing is fair and highly beneficial for all stakeholder groups.	4	◦ dependent on availability of whale sharks 60% fishermen 30% LGU 10% Barangay
	5. Business practices by whale-shark operators follows the basic principles of sustainable ecotourism	LOW: Business practices are unsustainable and inconsiderate of the whale-sharks, wildlife, and environment. HIGH: Business practices are well-researched, environmentally-friendly and sustainable.	4	Regulated business practices ◦ organized into Assoc. by mayor
	6. Accommodations and/or amenities for both the local and international visitors	LOW: Accommodations are insufficient and/or expensive. HIGH: Accommodations are sufficient and inexpensive.	2	Depends on financial capability ◦ organized by mayor
	7. Accessibility of whale-shark watching site/area (local transportation)	LOW: Whale-shark watching site is located in an isolated area which is difficult and expensive to reach via public transportation. HIGH: Whale-shark watching site is located is very accessible with multiple means and/or channels of public transportation.	4	30-meters from shoreline ◦ close to the road ◦ can stay overnight
SOCIAL	1. Appreciation by local residents and visitors for the environment/ecolcgy and marine species	LOW: Local residents and visitors do not appreciate the environment/ecology after conducting and/or participating in whale-shark watching activities. HIGH: High level of appreciation by local residents and visitors after conducting and/or participating in whale-shark watching activities.	4	yes. Initially kill/hurt the whale-sharks because of hindrance to fishing
	2. Knowledge/learning of local residents and visitors' on environmental/ecological issues	LOW: Local residents and visitors do not gain any new knowledge or information on environmental issues after conducting and/or participating in whale-shark watching activities. HIGH: Local residents and visitors gain an increased understanding for environmental issues after conducting and/or participating in whale-shark watching activities.	4	Yes. Constant training on how to handle tourists

	3. Contribution of whale-shark watching activity to the community's cultural value	LOW: Whale-shark watching activities do not contribute to the community's cultural value. HIGH: Whale-shark watching activities greatly contribute to the community's cultural value.	4	Comparison of before/after → appreciation for LGU effort
	4. Provides enjoyment to both local residents and visitors	LOW: Whale-shark watching activities do not provide enjoyment and/or entertainment to local residents and visitors. HIGH: Whale-shark watching activities provide high levels of enjoyment and/or entertainment to local residents and visitors.	4	Yes. Economic gains ↑ # of tourists i.e. [illegible]
	5. Contribution to local community's solidarity and social equity	LOW: Conflict and competition brought by whale-watching activities resulted to low-levels of solidarity and social equity in the local community. HIGH: Cooperation and collaboration among community members led to high levels of solidarity and social-equity in the local community.	4	(1) Before fishermen had some conflict → 3 years before (2) Now organized and very systematic organization
POLITICAL	1. Policies and/or regulations in the protection of the local ecology, whale-sharks, and other wildlife	LOW: No policies and/or regulations in the protection of the local ecology, whale-sharks, and other wildlife. HIGH: Policies and/or regulations are appropriate and sufficient for the protection the local ecology, whale-sharks, and other wildlife.	4	Ammendments + Regulations; increase of bayad
	2. Implementation and/or enforcement of policies, regulations, and guidelines on whale-sharks watching and environmental protection	LOW: Polices and/or regulations are not publicized and neglected by local government units and related government agencies. HIGH: Policies and/or regulations are strictly implemented by the local government units and related government agencies.	4	Bantay Dagat → police the whale-shark watching activities
	3. Issuance of national permits, licenses, and accreditation for whale-shark watching operators, divers, and fishermen	LOW: National permits, licenses, and accreditation certificates are not required and/or issued by local government units and related government agencies. HIGH: National permits, licenses, and accreditation certificates are required and/or issued by local government units and related government agencies; National permits, licenses, and accreditation certificates are regularly monitored for updates.	4	Accredited diving shops → revoked if there are violations

4

	4. Fee collection and income-sharing scheme	LOW: Fee collections and income-sharing schemes are neglected by the designated office in the local government unit. HIGH: Fee collections and income-sharing schemes are regularly monitored and implemented effectively.	4	LGU collects income & shares w/ other stakeholders → official receipt
	5. Decision-making activities and/or management decisions include the participation of all stakeholder groups	LOW: Decision-making activities and/or management issues are exclusive for the local government units. HIGH: Participation of all stakeholder groups is encouraged and included in the final outputs of the decision-making activities and/or management decisions.	4	Mgmt board → stakeholder representatives
TOTAL	MAX SCORE: 25 x 4 = 100			
PERCENTAGE SCORE	TOTAL/100 x 100			

5