

Tourism Potential of Pili Farm in the Province of Sorsogon

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Abstract— Tourism, without a doubt is a prime mover of one country's economy. Philippines, as an agricultural country already embraced tourism that gave rise to Agri-tourism. Farms were converted into tourist destination in the different regions of the country where tourist were drawn to visit the place to experience the farm life. Pili farms were known to be abundant in Sorsogon province producing pili fruit, nuts and processed products out of it that caters to the demand in the local and foreign market. However, it is rare of a Pili Farm that welcomes tourist for some educational and recreational activities in the Province of Sorsogon. This paper determined the tourism potential of pili farms in Sorsogon Province. A qualitative and quantitative research was deployed in order to find meaning to the study. This study revealed that there we're only few pili farms registered in the Province of Sorsogon and all are privately owned with an annual income of 3 million below. Facilities inside the farm were limited, service such as food and beverage and accommodation facility, aside from fresh pili fruit and nuts there were innovative products and delicacies made out of pili that are processed inside the farm. Pili farm owners encountered major problem in investing to tourism this includes budget, manpower and proper sewage. Pili Farms in Sorsogon Province have shown potential to become tourist attraction to local and international tourist. An action plan was presented to help the Pili farm owners in developing and sustaining their respective farms and to be a potential tourism specifically, Agri-tourism destination.

Keywords— Agri-tourism, Pili farm, Sorsogon, Tourism.

I. INTRODUCTION

Agritourism is a field that is growing in popularity as producers try to diversify and increase profits. By combining agriculture and tourism, agritourism offers new sources of revenue but also presents potential problems and legal complications to agritourism operators. Agritourism presents a unique opportunity to combine aspects of the tourism and agriculture industries to provide a number of financial, educational, and social benefits to tourists, producers, and communities. Agritourism gives producers an opportunity to generate additional income and an avenue for direct marketing to consumers. It enhances the tourism industry by increasing the volume of visitors to an area and the length of their stay. Agritourism also provides communities with the potential to increase their local tax bases and new employment opportunities. Additionally, agritourism provides educational opportunities to the public, helps to preserve agricultural lands, and allows states to develop business enterprises. (The National

Agricultural Law Center, 2017). Agritourism also came from the two words "agriculture" and "tourism". Agri-tourism (also referred to as "farm tourism"), as defined by Department of Tourism, is a form of tourism activity conducted in a rural farm area which may include tending to farm animals, planting, harvesting and processing of farm products. It covers attractions, activities, services and amenities as well as other resources of the area to promote an appreciation of the local culture, heritage and traditions through personal contact with the local people. When the farm is converted into an agritourism destination, there are certain things to be considered and proper tourism planning shall be taken into consideration. The activities, facilities and amenities should be suitably introduced to the public and the owner or developer should see to it that the destination not only offers relaxation but also a sense of promoting the sustainability of the agricultural side of the place.

The Philippines is a growing tourist hotspot, with world-class beach, diving and shopping destinations. The country is now exploring another fast growing segment – agri-tourism – and has recently joined the ranks of the world’s top eight agri-tourism destinations. Agri-tourism has been present in the Philippines since the 1990s, but was not institutionally defined then. In 1991, the Philippines Department of Tourism (DOT) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) came together and formulated the Philippine Tourism Master Plan (TMP); aimed at developing tourism on an environmentally sustainable basis. As a tropical country with an abundance of natural resources, biological diversity and a strong cultural heritage, the Philippines is well-positioned for agri-tourism. At present, the Philippines has a total of 32 agri-tourism sites, including 27 protected areas consisting of strawberry and organic vegetable farms in Benguet, as well as pineapple and coffee plantations in Bukidnon. (Research, Asia Research Media, 2013) The province of Sorsogon can also offer a lot of agritourism if the local government will take into consideration the proper planning and development of those farms that can offer an all in package of being an agritourism destination. In our province, Pili is the most popular agricultural produce and the farms of these Pili trees can also be a haven for relaxation and different form of activities for tourists.

Pili belongs to the genus *Canarium*, comprising 78 species (Weeks, 2009) in the family Burseraceae which includes four genera. There are about 40 species of *Canarium* in the Philippines. Some authorities believe that there are three or four species of pili in the island, of which only two yield the highly priced nuts. These are *Canarium ovatum* Engler, which is mainly found in the Bicol region and known for its oil. It is a fairly large tree that reaches a height of about 20 m and a trunk diameter of about 40 cm. Leaves are alternate and compound with opposite smooth leaflets, which are rounded at the base and pointed at the tip. (McKeon, 2016). Sorsogon is one of the provinces in the Bicol region with abundant sources of Pili and the also hold a Pili festival to recognize the native crop. Some private owners of pili farms are converting their place into a tourist destination, offering services to

satisfy the needs of the visitors and also a place that is good for relaxation.

This study focused on the situation of the Pili farms that includes the facilities present in the area, the services and products they are offering and the challenges that they might face in developing the area. Also, this study developed an action program or plan that can help the owners of the place in the development and enhancement of their farms in the future. In other regions, there are some pili farms that already part of agri-tourism and being known to the public, they are becoming an on-the-go destination even though the location of their place is far from the city. This only means that these farms can be a way in promoting the agritourism in the province.

The researchers determined the tourism potential of the pili farms in the Province of Sorsogon. This study developed an action plan for the destination to aid them in the promotion and proper recognition of the services, amenities and facilities that can be offered to the tourist. By the established data and information of this study, the researchers provided an output that will benefit the stakeholders and other entities that make up the Pili farm tourist destination. The number of Pili farms in the province made it easy to recommend appropriate plans and programs accordingly. It is anticipated that this study provided relevant and essential information to contribute to the objectives that will drive the industry forward. Furthermore, it is also important that this study provided awareness and knowledge on the gaps of the different entities to be filled in to create, promote and improve the value of the destination and the products it is making that is beneficial to every sector of the industry.

The primary objective of this paper is to determine the tourism potential of Pili farm in Sorsogon Province. Specifically, it aims to (1) Determine the profile of Pili Farm in Sorsogon Province (2) Determine the tourism potential of Pili Farm in terms of facilities, activities, services, and products (3) Determine the problems encountered by the Pili Farm along facilities, activities, services and product and (4) Propose an action plan for development of Pili Farm based on the result of the study.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used the descriptive method since it describes the status of the pili farms in the Province of Sorsogon. Quantitative research was employed to determine the number of farms with similar facilities, products and services as an important factor in determining its tourism potential. While Qualitative research was used using unstructured questionnaire and in-depth interview to determine the challenges faced by the pili farm owners in sustaining and developing their area.

Respondents

The respondents of this study consists of ten (10) pili farms in the Province of Sorsogon. These were the registered Pili Farms in the Sorsogon Province based from the data gathered from the Department of Trade and Industry Sorsogon and Local Government Unit. The pili farms identified were one (1) from Castilla, two (2) from Sorsogon City, (1) in Prieto Diaz, one (1) in Gubat, one (1) in Barcelona, one (1) in Bulusan, two (2) from Irosin and one (1) in Casiguran.

These farms consist of at least ten (10) fruit bearing pili trees and are engage in buying and selling pili fruit and nuts. Pili farms that are not registered in DTI and LGU were not part of the study. Smaller pili farms with less than ten fruit bearing pili trees were also excluded as respondents. Also, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and IATF protocol, the researchers did not include pili farms in other municipalities that were located in the remote areas.

Research Instrument

There were two sources of data collected, primary and secondary source. The questionnaire was designed to gather information that determined the respondent's profile, and the facilities, activities, products and services available inside the pili farm and to identify the problems / challenges that the pili farm owners were facing in sustaining and developing the area. The secondary source of data was gathered information of the registered pili farms from the Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Agriculture, local government unit and unpublished researchers, studies,

journals, periodicals, and internet. All the sources are put together to achieve the research objective and to present the study meaningfully.

Data Collection and Procedures

The researchers prepared the letter to the different government agencies to secure data of the registered pili farms in Sorsogon Province. The researchers personally visited the government agencies to get the data needed. The Department of Trade and Industry provided the list of the registered pili farms in the Province of Sorsogon. Since there were only few registered pili farms registered in the DTI, the researchers visited the different Municipalities to get more locally registered pili farms. Thru the help of their local municipal officer, the researchers were provided additional data of registered pili farms.

The questionnaire and letter to respondents were prepared before the actual visit to the pili farm. The actual visit was done on weekdays to make sure that the pili farm owner is present as well as the workers. A letter asking permission to conduct and gather data from the respondents were distributed and assured the confidentiality of the gathered responses from them. The questionnaire was distributed and the respondents were given time to analyze and answer the question to the fullest of their understanding. An in-depth interview immediately followed after answering the survey questionnaire. The researcher assured and guaranteed that all the respondents have to answer the questionnaire will remain confidential in order to promote trust between respondents and the researchers.

Statistical Treatment of Data

- The data gathered in this study was subjected to the following statistical treatment:
- Percentage was used in determining the demographic profile of the respondents;
- Frequency count was employed in determining the number of respondents with similar facilities, activities, products and services in their pili farms.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study sought to determine the tourism potential of pili farm in the Province of Sorsogon. There were ten

pili farms identified by the Department of Trade in Industry and Local Government Unit within the Province which are included in the study. All the respondents answered the survey questionnaire and entertained the researchers for an interview.

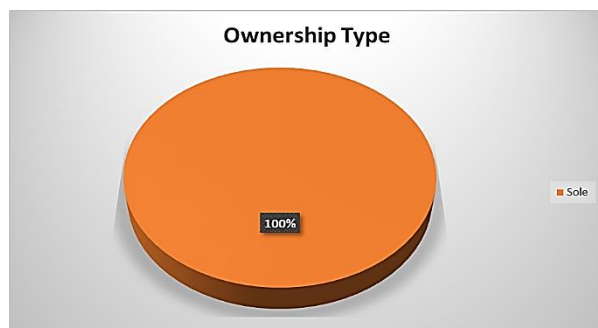


Fig. 1.1

I. PROFILE OF THE FARM

Figure 1.1 showed that a hundred percent (100%) or all of the pili farm respondents have sole proprietorship, which indicates that the farm business has only one owner. Better control and flexibility in the operation are some of the advantages in this kind of business ownership. As to the farm, it is important to be flexible in terms of the operation because of the products seasonality.

Single ownership of the farm is an advantageous strategy of the farm owners. Sultan, S. (2014) believed that intellectual property of a sole trader requirements and concerns are, therefore, dependent on the nature and scale of operations and on relationship of business with other entities and enterprises. As this form of business has least government intervention in formation and liability is unlimited. This form is treated suitable where a single person can control over all the activities.

According to the Center for Agriculture and food systems a sole proprietorship is created without any formal action—the owner (called the “sole proprietor”) simply begins the operation of the market. A farmers market structured as a sole proprietorship have a single owner. The owner of a farmers’ market is the person who is responsible for satisfying the

market’s tax obligations as a business. The sole proprietorship is a for-profit business, and, as such, taxes are owed on any profits generated by the market organization. This may help the pili farm owners to lessen the burden of complying tax requirements to the government.

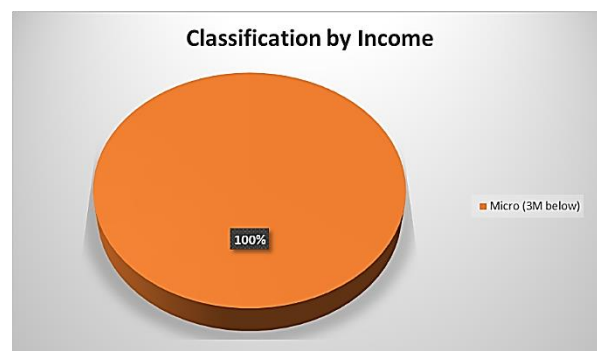


Fig. 1.2

Figure 1.2 reveals that all the farm businesses interviewed were classified as Micro businesses according to their income. All of them are earning below 3 Million pesos per year.

Amfo (2020), in his study identified factors that influence income diversification that include the age of the farm, access to credits, extension contacts, the information sources on climate change, and government support. Similarly, Pili farms’ income are dependent also the said factors.

Pili plays a significant role in the local economy of Sorsogon Province. However, majority of the Pili farms were small. Aside from fewer full-grown trees in the Pili farm, weather condition is another factor that greatly affects the income of the farmers in the province. For an instance, the typhoons destroy agricultural assets that affects the trade flows and cause losses to farmers income.

According to pili farm owners, the government gave them support by providing heavy equipment to be used in farm activities such as planting and harvesting but the farm owners did not assure the rise of income by using the equipment because the climate is the prime factor that affects them.

II. TOURISM POTENTIAL OF PILI FARM

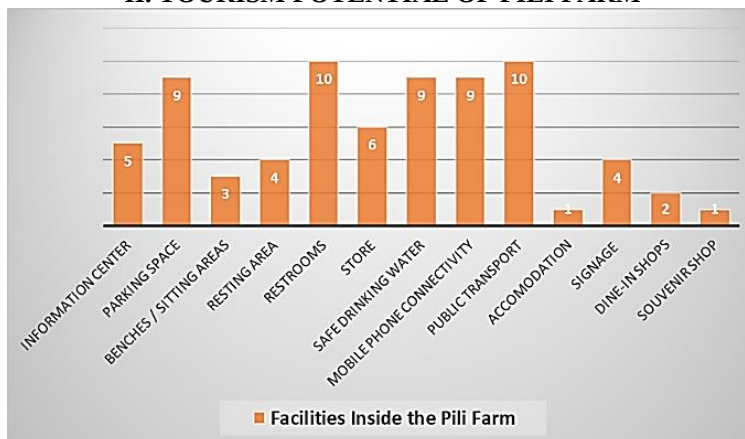


Fig. 1.3

Figure 1.3 exhibited the percentage of respondents with the available facilities found inside their farm. Out of the ten (10) respondents, five (5) of them have information or entrance table facility in front of the farm, nine (9) respondents have parking space, three (3) respondents have benches and sitting areas for visitors, four (4) have available resting areas like nipa hut and waiting shed, all of them have available restrooms on site, six (6) have stores selling goods inside or nearby the farm, nine (9) have safe drinking water, all of them have available internet and network provider for data connection, all of them are accessible by using a public transport, only one (1) have an available accommodation for visitors, three (3) have their own signage for their business names, two (2) have available dine in shops inside the farm, only one (1) have souvenir shop available inside the farm.

Visitor / tourist satisfaction is important in the success of every tourist destination. One of the most significant factors that contributes to tourist satisfaction is the presence of facilities they may use and need while inside the tourist destination. As to the Pili farms, restrooms, connectivity, public transport, safe drinking water, parking space and store were all present. This implies that Pili farm owners themselves knows the importance of these facilities in the day-to-day activity in the farm. While, very few of the pili farms have signages, benches / sitting areas, souvenir shop and dine-in shops primarily because the workers in the farm are relatives of the owner and others were

residing near the farm and go home when they feel the need for food and for a rest.

In the study of Darroca, J. (2020) she stated that it is generally believed that the attractiveness of a destination is enhanced the more attributes the destination has. In order to attract visitors, destination must develop facilities and services to enhance its attractiveness. Therefore, in order for the Pili farm to attract tourist, the facilities should be present and attractive.

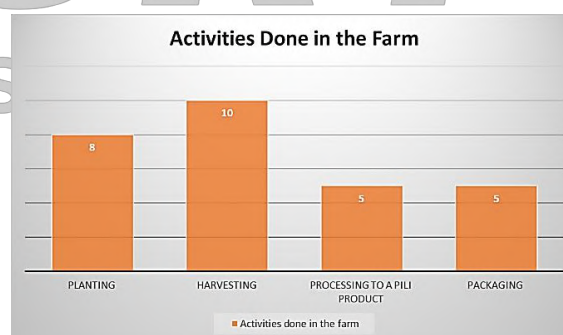


Fig. 1.4

Figure 1.4 showed the activities done or available in the farm. Out of ten (10) respondents, eight (8) are still planting pili trees inside the farm, all of them are harvesting pili fruits from the fruit bearing trees, five (5) are processing the pili fruit into a product like pili sweets, accessories, and pili nut, five (5) are doing their own packaging of the finished product.

All pili farms engaged in harvesting since the farm owners' primary purpose is to generate income out of pili fruit. While 8 of them continuously planting pili trees. Manual harvesting of pili fruit is done to the farm worker. These are those farms with extra space for the new pili tree growing. Planting pili trees can be an action for sustaining the production of pili fruit throughout the generation since old aged trees may easily damage by the typhoon with strong wind impact. With continues planting of Pili trees there will be a continuous supply in the market of the pili products and the pili farm owners and workers will have a continual income.

Trainings provided by the different government agencies such as Department of Trade and Industry and Department of Agriculture had helped the 5 pili farm owner to have extensive knowledge and skills in processing pili fruit to different goods such as pili delicacies, pili oil, accessories, home décor and more as well as packaging the products that contributed to the increase of their income. Some of them were also provided with machinery as support for processing the harvested pili fruits. It is viewed that harvesting alone may not suffice the income of the farm owners and processing the Pili into another product such as pili delicacies and home décor can increase their potential income.



Fig 1.5

Figure 1.5 presents the services offered by the pili farms to tourists/ visitors. Only one (1) of the ten (10) farms offer food and beverage, and accommodation services to their visitors. This explains that aside from the farm workers, there were no or only a few were visiting the pili farm where farm owners need to provide food and beverage service and

accommodation service. Another reason is that the farm is not known to the public that they can visit it.

In every tourist destination, food and beverage service and accommodation are the major services needed by the tourist or visitors. Food and beverage, as the basic human need should be available and accessible in any destination. Nowadays, families have more time to spend travelling with their children in the countryside or in areas that are not overcrowded such as farms. Accommodation should be offered for tourist for an overnight in the place. The longer the stay of the tourist, the more income will be generated from tourism.

As to pili farms, the limited offering of tourist services such as food and beverage service and accommodation service will also limit the time of stay and visit of the target market. Giaccio, V. et. al. (2018) in their study showed that some economic variables (food service, direct selling and public subsidies) determine an increase in farm income, whereas an increased number of family employees may have a negative impact on this income.



Fig 1.6

Figure 1.6 showed the products made from the pili trees and fruits. All of them are producing fresh pili fruit and pili nuts. Out of ten (10) respondents, nine (5) are producing processed pili fruit and nut like delicacies and pili oil, four (4) are producing souvenir items from pili trees and fruits like bags, placemats, accessories, etc.

According to the owners of the Pili farms, the fresh pili fruit and nut were the primary products that they are selling in the market. Pili nut had the highest demand from them in the local market. One of the Pili farm

owner supplies pili nuts in an international market. They also said that there is a continuous demand for the fresh pili and pili nut. On the other hand, 5 of the Pili farm owners processed the pili into delicacies and supplied them all over the region. And 4 were engaged in making souvenir items from pili. Many tourists visit their municipality and buy the products to taste it and bring it into their hometown. Some of the processed products were exported in other countries.

In her study, Pham, L. (2020) discussed that as a nut, *Canarium ovatum* is considered the priced commodity, and it is often used in the confectionery industry. The pulp, which is totally discarded as waste, contains considerable quantities of bioactive compounds present in the pulp meal as well as in the oil. This shows that the pili nut can be utilized into another innovative product that can be used by other industry such as confectionary and cosmetic industry.

With an assured abundant pili fruit and nuts from the Sorsogon pili farm, it can be a potential place to be visited by the tourist who would like to see how the pili fruit and nuts are processed from fresh fruit to another delicacy or material product that can be a souvenir or home décor. This curiosity of the tourist and with the knowledge that they can glean from visiting the farm may lead into a well-known tourism attraction.

III. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY THE PILI FARM IN DEVELOPING THE AREA AS POTENTIAL TOURISM DESTINATION

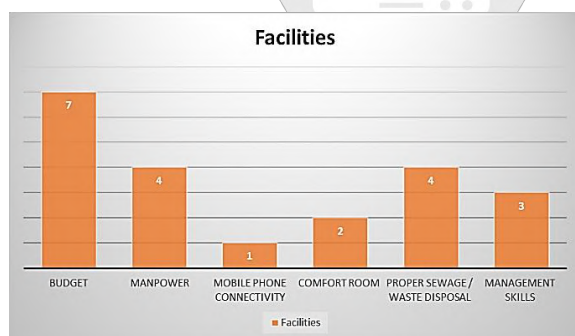


Fig 1.7

Figure 1.7 revealed the problems encountered by the pili farm owners in developing their area as a potential tourism destination. Out of ten (10) respondents, seven

(7) respondents said that budget is one of their concerns, four (4) respondents have problem with manpower, two (2) respondents does not have a good connectivity in their place, two (2) does not have a comfort room available for the guests, four (4) have problems with proper sewage and waste disposal, three (3) are having problems with their management skills. None of the respondents have problems with the maintenance of the farm, water supply, electricity supply and accessibility.

Pili farm owners were open for the possibility of opening their farm to tourist and became part of the agri-tourism industry. However, like other industries that would like to become a tourist destination, the pili farm owners have the same predicament in the process of developing their farms to become a tourist spot.

Budget seemed to be the common problem of the Pili farm owners. It clearly indicates that physical development like putting up facilities inside the farm may require a huge amount of money. Sturdy benches and nipa hut as resting facilities were some of the said facilities needed.

A person to facilitate the operation of the farm as tourist destination was sought to be a problem as well by the Pili farm owners. The respondents said that since majority of them were in their 50's and the staff were concentrated and mastered planting, harvesting and processing pili, they might need some training if they will open for the public. Proper waste disposal was also a challenge to them when tourist came and bright non-biodegradable materials. This might cause environmental harm or problem.

There is one farm with problems in connectivity because of their location. Though there were network providers in the area, but the connection is very weak. Connectivity is important to farm owners for the trading of their goods. They can sell the products easily through communicating with their customers. They can also use the social media and other online platform to market their products.

Majority of the pili farms cannot provide food and beverage service and accommodation to visitors because according to the owners there are only a few

that are visiting the farm. And most of them are located in remote areas of their Municipality.

Meanwhile, along product, the pili farm owners are worried about their annual harvest because of the typhoons. Since the province is experiencing almost 2 to 3 typhoons per month. This is their major concern because their income is also affected.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

1. This study presented the data of the pili farms in Sorsogon Province. As to status of the pili farms, all pili farms are in sole proprietorship; they are earning 3 million below per annum.
2. The tourism potential of pili farms in terms of facilities available inside the farms are restroom, public transport, safe drinking water, mobile phone connectivity, and parking space; major activities done in the farm are not only planting, and harvesting but also processing pili into a new product and packaging the pili products; there is only one farm that offers food and beverage service and accommodation service to visitors/tourism; processed pili fruit and nuts, souvenir items from pili tree and fruit are offered as products of the pili farms aside from the fresh pili fruit and nut.
3. The common problems encountered by the pili farm owners in developing the pili farms for a potential tourist destination are budget, manpower, proper sewage/waste disposal and management skills. Typhoon is another factor why their harvest and income is affected and are short in budget for development of the farm.

RECOMMENDATION

Tie up with the government and private sectors for the development and marketing of the Pili Farm

This will help the Pili Farm owners to get support in the development of the area and be part of Agri-tourism. The Department of Agriculture teaming up with Department of Tourism may encourage and promote the farms to fully develop the area for local and international tourists. An improvement in the farm can create a multiplier effect in the community.

Implement sustainable agricultural practices

With the natural disasters that we are experiencing in the province. It is important to come up with strategies to sustain the availability of Pili trees to avoid disrupting production cycles. A continuous tree planting will ensure availability of the pili fruit in the future.

Develop the farm to become Agri-tourism destination

Because of the seasonality of the pili fruit, the researchers suggests that pili farms should develop the farm into a welcoming destination of visitors/ tourist to generate more income. A signage with the farm name is necessary to be known by the people who are passing by. Visiting pili farm can be more enjoyable by offering educational activities for tourists. Informative signage indicating all the information about the pili tree, starting from planting down to processing the pili fruit. This can be more attractive to tourists and aside from enjoying they will learn something new about their visit. This can be an initial step to attract tourist to visit the farm. An improvement in the farm can create a multiplier effect in the community.

PILI FARMS IN SORSOGON PROVINCE

ACTION PLAN

1. Physical Environment

Objectives

- Create an aesthetic appeal of the farm.
- Create resting areas for visitors and farm employees.
- Provide signages

Strategies or Activities

- Farm landscaping. Trim undesirable grass to create a clean and more spacious area.
- Allocate and arrange specific space for all farm equipment.
- Plant crops that may add brighter, fresher environment.
- Create benches, nipa hut resting house in the different areas within the farm.
- Conceptualize modern design benches out of local materials than can serve as back ground for picture taking of visitors.

- Create signages with farm name, history and information of pili trees and other crops, directions and facilities.

Key Person

- Farm owners, Farm workers, LGU

2. Farm Operation

Objectives

- Create rules and regulations in farm operation.
- Showcase farm activities to tourist/visitor
- Provide food and beverage store

Strategies or Activities

- Set entrance fees / environmental fee for tourist / visitor.
- Create farm rules and regulations for visitors (e.g. operating time, do's and don'ts, proper waste disposal, carrying capacity of the farm, etc.)
- Train farm employees on how to welcome visitors; give educational talk and demonstration of pili farm activities from planting, growing, harvesting and processing.
- Create food and beverage store selling native delicacies, simple snacks and beverage for visitors to buy.

Key Person

- Farm Owners, Farm workers, LGU, TESDA and Department of Agriculture for Training partnership

3. Marketing

Objectives

- Promote the Pili farm as tourist destination
- Strategies or Activities
- Create social media account for the use of promoting the farm.
- Invite vloggers to the farm and assist them in creating vlogs of the place.
- Invite youth groups, students, LGU staff and the people in the community for some recreational activities such as picnic, farm tour to promote the area.

Key Person

- Farm owners, Farm workers, Vloggers, LGU, Community

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