

PH world tourism ranking up 12 points

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It's getting more fun for the Philippines as the country's standing in the world rose by 12 notches, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF) Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2013. PHOTO BY RICK ALBERTO

MANILA, Philippines—It's getting more fun for the Philippines.

The Philippines has become one of the "rising stars in emerging market economies" in travel and tourism as its standing in the world rose by 12 notches, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF) Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2013.

The Makati Business Club announced this positive development after the report was released in Geneva, Switzerland, on Thursday.

The Philippines climbed from its No. 94 spot in 2012 to being 82nd in 2013 "on the back of policy improvements supporting the industry," making it "the most improved country in the region."

The report said the Philippines ranked 16th regionally.

The WEF report covered the Travel and Tourism competitive indices of 140 countries using data from publicly available sources, international travel and tourism institutions, and experts. In the Philippines, WEF worked through the Makati Business Club.

The report said among the country's comparative strengths were its natural resources (44th), price competitiveness (24th) and a very strong and improving prioritization of the travel and tourism industry (15th).

First in world

“The government spending on the sector as a percentage of GDP (gross domestic product) is now 1st in the world and tourism marketing and branding campaigns are seen to be increasingly effective,” the report said.

It also cited the country’s efforts at ensuring that several aspects of policies and regulations were conducive to the development of travel and tourism.

Among these policies were better protection of property rights, more openness toward foreign investments and few visa requirements for foreign visitors, which earned a 7th ranking.

Areas of concern

But the report also noted that other areas need to be addressed. Among these were the cost and length of business processes (ranked 94th and 117th, respectively) that made starting a business in the country difficult.

Safety and security concerns (ranked 103rd); inadequate health and hygiene (94th); and underdeveloped ground transport, tourism and ICT infrastructure “are all holding back the potential of the economy’s T&T competitiveness,” it said.

Through the report, the WEF sought to assess the factors and policies that boost a country’s travel and tourism competitiveness vis-à-vis other countries.

In general, the Philippines landed within the Top 50 in 4 out of 14 component pillars of the travel and tourism competitiveness index in 2013.

Top 50

The country also made it to the Top 50 in terms of 27 out of 79 indicators comprising the travel and tourism competitiveness index for this year.

Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Spain and the United Kingdom clinched the top five places, showing that Europe was still the leading region for travel and tourism competitiveness.

The five countries were followed by the United States in the overall ranking.

Apart from the biennial Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, the WEF releases other publications, including its flagship annual Global Competitiveness Report.