



3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting

The Role of Rural Advisory Services in Agricultural Innovation Systems

26-28 September 2012, Manila, Philippines

Pre-Travel Information

Dear Participants,

Please find below some useful information for your travel to Manila, Philippines.

I. Contact Information

As host of the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting, APIRAS is responsible for logistics. In case of any logistical question (venue of the meeting, accommodation, illness, security aspects) please contact:

DR. VIRGINIA R. CARDENAS

Professor

College of Public Affairs and Development

University of the Philippines Los Baños

College 4031 Laguna, Philippines

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Mobile: +63 (0) 920 905 9500

Fax: +63 (0)49 536 0407

Email: apirasnetwork@hotmail.com

For content questions, side events, or financial issues, contact the GFRAS secretariat (dorothee.loetscher@g-fras.org).

II. Conference Venue

The 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting will take place in Manila, Philippines, at:

The Heritage Hotel

Roxas Boulevard corner EDSA

Pasay City, Manila, Philippines

Telephone: +63 02 854 8888

Fax: +63 02 854 8833

Email: inquiry@heritagehotelmanila.com; guest@heritagehotelmanila.com

Website: <http://www.millenniumhotels.com/ph/heritagemanila/index.html>

The Heritage Hotel is about 4km (a 15-20 minute drive) from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. The Hotel is close to the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Phil-

ippine International Convention Center (PICC). Nearby points of interest also include the SM Mall of Asia and Ayala Center.

Download the map and directions to Heritage Hotel at http://www.millenniumhotels.com/ph/heritagemanila/downloads/p_asia_manila.pdf

III. Accommodation

Self-sponsored participants will arrange their own accommodation.

The Heritage Hotel (meeting venue)

[The Heritage Hotel Manila](#) offers restaurants, bar, telephone, fax, Internet access (7 USD for 24-hour use), computer work stations and some recreation and fitness facilities, among others.

To make your hotel reservation and avail of the special GFRAS hotel rate of 4,000 PHP/night (95.50 USD as of 8 May 2012), please contact **Ms. Janice Tan** and **mention GFRAS:**

MS. JANICE TAN

Account Manager, Sales and Marketing

Telephone: +632 854 8888 ext 7115

Email: janice.tan@heritagehotelmanila.com

Other Hotels

Alternatively, you can book a room at the following hotels. Note that there are no special GFRAS rates at these hotels:

- **The Mabuhay Manor**

2933 F.B. Harrison cor. Ortigas Street

Pasay City, Philippines

Telephone: +632 702.2700

Fax: +63 2 6389255 and 7022780

Email: centralreservations@legendhotels.com.ph

Website: www.mabuhaymanor.com.ph

Room rates start at 63 USD per night (for details visit the website)

The Mabuhay Manor is just 2 km or a 10-minute drive away from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

- **Microtel Inn and Suites**

Coral Way Ave. corner Seaside Boulevard

SM Mall of Asia Complex,

Pasay City, Philippines

Telephone: +63 2 899 7171 / 870.0100 / 897 1039

Fax: +63 2 870.0319

Email: info@microtel.ph

Website: www.microtelphilippines.com

Room rates start at 98 USD per night (for details visit the website)

This economy hotel is located near the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

IV. Visa requirements

The Philippine Government strongly enforces immigration and entry laws. You should ensure you have proper and valid visas and remain aware of your visa status while in the Philippines. When preparing your visa request, be aware that:

- Immigration authorities may require proof of an onward or return ticket.
- Your passport must be valid for at least six (6) months beyond the date of entry into the Philippines.
- Application for visa needs to reach the Philippine embassy/consulate in time. We advise you to send your application to the embassy/ consulate at least two months before your entry to the Philippines.
- The government requires some travellers to present proof of yellow fever vaccination. Find more information in section *X health watch*.

Citizens of a number of countries do not need a visa to enter the Philippines. See a list of those countries in Annex 1. If you need a visa upon arrival (VUA) or waiver of visa, please contact APIRAS (apirasnetwork@hotmail.com) as soon as possible so APIRAS can make the necessary arrangements with the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs and the Bureau of Immigration.

Most Philippine embassies and consulates process visas quickly. However, you must anticipate glitches along the way (such as problems with travel documentation). Provide at least one month lead time for visa application and processing.

Further inquiries may be addressed to:

The Visa Division (Telephone No.: +63 (02) 556-0000, ask the operator to connect you to Visa Division)

The Department of Foreign Affairs, 2330 Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

Any Philippine Embassy or Consulate abroad.

V. Arrival and Transport to and from the Venue

APIRAS has arranged transport from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) to the Heritage Hotel from evening of 24 September until morning of 26 September. After you clear the Customs Area of the airport, proceed to the International Organisations' Desk located at the arrival lobby of Terminal 1 (left side near Duty Free and OWWA Desk). A representative from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) will assist you in paging the assigned driver.

If you prefer to take your own taxi, it will be approximately 10 USD

VI. Language and Culture

Filipino is the main language used in the Philippines with English as second language. Most locals speak proficient English.

Filipinos are known to be very friendly and hospitable people. Take the time to smile and say "thank you." You will receive an even better response if you throw in a little Tagalog, such as "salamat po", which means "thank you".

VII. Money

The Philippines' currency is the Peso. 1 USD = 42.00 PHP (as of 9 May 2012). Have your currencies changed in banks inside the international airport. Several banks are likewise found around the vicinity of the Hotel.

You can use your ATM cards to withdraw funds. The three major local ATM consortia in the Philippines are *BancNet*, *MegaLink* and *Expressnet*. International networks, like *PLUS* and *Cirrus*, are accessible with many ATMs, however Cirrus is more predominant than PLUS. ATMs are also located in the shopping malls.

Credit card holders can use VISA, MasterCard, American Express and JCB cards in many commercial locations in the Philippines.

VIII. Weather and Climate

The Philippines is a tropical country with two distinct seasons. From June to September, the country experiences a rainy season brought by the south-western monsoon. From October to February, the north-eastern monsoon brings cold winds creating cool and dry weather. In September you can expect the Metro Manila temperature to be 73-86°F / 23-31°C.

IX. Keep Safe!

While Filipinos are generally friendly and accommodating, Manila, like many other large cities in the world, has its own share of security problems, especially pickpocketing. For your own safety, you are advised to exercise a high degree of caution at all times.

- Do not flash your valuables (e.g. iPods and smart phones). Carry small change and don't flash large bills.
- Be especially cautious when out at night: Do not enter alleyways and remote areas.
- Women are especially advised to travel in groups.
- Ignore strangers accosting you outside the hotel or on the streets.
- Be careful when using credit cards.

While there are reported threats of terrorism in the Philippines, tourists in Manila are normally not at risk. The Philippine government has tightened security in Metro Manila and other areas, including airports and seaports.

Contact the Embassy or Consulate of the Philippines nearest you for the most up-to-date information.

X. Health Watch

Some actions will prevent you from falling ill:

- Drink only bottled water. Tap water is not considered safe for drinking.
- Manila is not a malaria area. No special prophylaxis is needed to attend the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting.
- Although yellow fever is not a risk in the Philippines, the government requires some travelers arriving from [countries with risk of yellow fever virus transmission](#) to present proof of yellow fever vaccination.
- For specific details on proper vaccinations and medications, see [Yellow Fever & Malaria Information by Country](#).

Should you fall ill during the 3rd GFRAS Annual Meeting, contact Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas (see top of this document).

XI. Emergency Numbers

In the event of problems on transit, on arrival or while in the Philippines, please call Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas (see top of this document).

YOUR SURVIVAL GUIDE TO A SAFE AND HEALTHY TRAVEL:

BE PROACTIVE!

BE PREPARED!

BE PROTECTED!

ANNEX 1: No-Visa Entry for 21-Day Stay under E.O. 408

Nationals from the following countries are allowed to enter the Philippines **without a visa** for a period of stay of 21 days or less:

A-D	E-L	M-R	S-Z
Andorra	Ecuador	Madagascar	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Angola	El Salvador	Malawi	Saint Lucia
Antigua and Barbuda	Equatorial Guinea	Malaysia	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Argentina	Eritrea	Maldives	Samoa
Australia	Estonia	Mali	San Marino
Austria	Ethiopia	Malta	Sao Tome and Principe
Bahamas	Fiji	Marshall Islands	Saudi Arabia
Bahrain	Finland	Mauritania	Senegal
Barbados	France	Mauritius	Seychelles
Belgium	Gabon	Mexico	Singapore
Benin	Gambia	Micronesia	Slovakia
Bhutan	Germany	Monaco	Slovenia
Bolivia	Ghana	Mongolia	Solomon Islands
Botswana	Gibraltar	Morocco	Somalia
Brazil*	Greece	Mozambique	South Africa
Brunei Darussalam	Grenada	Myanmar	Spain
Bulgaria	Guatemala	Namibia	Suriname
Burkina Faso	Guinea	Nepal	Swaziland
Burundi	Guinea Bissau	Netherlands	Sweden
Cambodia	Guyana	New Zealand	Switzerland
Cameroon	Haiti	Nicaragua	Thailand
Canada	Honduras	Niger	Togo
Cape Verde	Hungary	Norway	Trinidad and Tobago
Central African Republic	Iceland	Oman	Tunisia
Chad	Indonesia	Palau	Turkey
Chile	Ireland	Panama	Tuvalu
Colombia	Israel*	Papua New Guinea	Uganda
Comoros	Italy	Paraguay	United Arab Emirates
Congo	Jamaica	Peru	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Costa Rica	Japan	Poland	United Republic of Tanzania
Cote d'Ivoire	Kenya	Portugal	USA
Cyprus	Kiribati	Qatar	Uruguay
Czech Republic	Kuwait	Republic of Korea	Venezuela
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Romania	Vietnam
Denmark	Latvia	Russia	Zambia
Djibouti	Lesotho	Rwanda	Zimbabwe
Dominica	Liberia		
Dominican Republic	Liechtenstein		
	Lithuania		
	Luxembourg		