

Philippines Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai on track for handover in March; reaches 87% completion

DUBAI, UAE, December 28, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ --

- Bangkóta aims to promote sustainability—with most materials readily available, easily sourced locally from UAE's local markets, and are recyclable
- Bangkóta to deploy leading-edge art, architecture, and design to highlight the progressive development of the nation, as well as tell the untold story of Filipinos in an engaging and interactive platform.
- Designed by Budji+Royal Architecture+Design and curated by Marian Pastor Roces, the 1,386-square-metre pavilion reimagines the Filipinos as a coral reef, interconnecting not only with each other but also with the world
- The Philippines Pavilion aims to focus on dedicated collaborations or “bayanihan”—which has been greatly visible with the collective efforts between the Philippine team, the UAE-based construction team, as well as other multi-cultural and multinational entities, both in the Philippines and Dubai

The Philippine government has announced that the construction of the Philippines Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai has already reached 87 per cent completion.

Philippine Department of Trade and Industry (PDTI) and Commissioner General Secretary Ramon Lopez said that ‘Bangkóta’ is on track of its scheduled handover in March 2021, with the teams involved exerting full efforts. Bangkóta also highlights the country's passion for sustainability—sourcing majority of its materials from the local markets of UAE. According to Lopez, such readily available materials are among the contributing factors that led to them staying on track of their schedule despite the movement restrictions caused by the pandemic.



Ramon Lopez, Philippine Department of Trade and Industry (PDTI) and Commissioner General Secretary

"I am immensely proud of our team for their efficiency and hard work. Their sheer determination to showcase the beauty of the Philippines through our pavilion has made it possible for us to be on time for its unveiling at the upcoming Expo 2020," said PDTI Secretary Lopez. "The Pavilion's concept, including the materials to be used, has been well thought of by the creators, a reason it became easier for the team to go ahead and build the design. While recent restrictions brought about by the pandemic posed a challenge, they also unleashed within the team their resourcefulness and creativity—allowing them to pull such magnificent work without any delays."



Rosvi Gaetos, PDTI Assistant Secretary

The Secretary also, expressed his gratitude to the Expo 2020 Dubai team for their assistance and close collaboration with the Philippine team, saying: "We extend our deepest gratitude to the team behind Expo 2020 for their efficiency that made it easier for us to actualise our Pavilion. Their assistance, including logistical and administrative support like technical advice and facilitation of permits and clearances, have been greatly instrumental in helping us stay on track of our schedule."



A day exterior photo of the Philippines pavilion, "Bangkóta" at the Expo 2020 Dubai

Omar Shehadeh, Chief International Participants Officer, International Participants at Expo 2020 Dubai, also commended the efficiency of the team in terms of the construction of the pavilion, saying: "The sheer passion of the people behind the Philippines Pavilion is truly commendable, and I am honoured to have witnessed their creativity and hard work coming to life through Bangkóta. I am confident that Filipinos in the UAE will be further proud of their identity once they get to witness what the Philippine team has prepared for them in the upcoming Expo 2020."

Philippine Ambassador to the UAE Hjayceelyn Quintana, for her part, expressed her pride for the

team behind the pavilion, saying: “I am very proud of the Philippines Expo team for the magnificent creativity they have unleashed in the creation of Bangkóta. This will boost the name of our country at Expo 2020 and will no doubt create a strong presence for our community in what will be the largest event ever held in the MENA region. I am looking forward to the unveiling of our very own national pavilion and I am confident that it will create countless opportunities for Filipinos to thrive, shine, and cement their impact across various sectors globally.”



A night exterior photo of the Philippines pavilion, “Bangkóta” at the Expo 2020 Dubai

The design of the Bangkóta Pavilion, or “coral reef” in ancient Tagalog, honours the natural resources that the Philippines has to offer, specifically the architectural character of the coral reefs native to the archipelago.

Designed by Budji+Royal Architecture+Design and curated by Marian Pastor-Roces, the 1,386-square-metre pavilion reimagines the Filipinos as a coral reef, interconnecting not only with each other but also with the world, thereby making them an extensive global community.

Secretary Lopez underscored that not only will the splendour of Bangkóta be witnessed by the world, it will also be showcased to the Filipinos back home, as the pavilion will be brought to Clark Freeport Zone in Pampanga once Expo 2020 concludes.

An information hub

According to PDTI Assistant Secretary Rosvi Gaetos, who also serves as the Alternate Commissioner General of Bangkóta, the pavilion promises to showcase the Filipino diaspora spread throughout the world through travel, migration and technology.

“Bangkóta will deploy leading-edge art, architecture, and design to present a nation bound by zealous interconnectivity, a culture of compassion, and a tropical, fevered imagination. It highlights the progressive development of the nation through the state-of-the-art portals that promise immersive experiences for visitors—allowing them to embark on a journey of discovery of the nature of the Philippines,” she said.

There will be eight areas in the Philippines Pavilion, including the following:

Area 1A (Entrance)- Welcome To Past And Future: Haliya by Duddley Diaz

Area 1B (Plaza) - Musical Fusion Of Nature And Culture: Mystique Cross by Dan Raralio
Area 2 - Nature Is Peace: Roots of the Universe by Lee Paje, Scott Tuason and Ivan Sarenas
Area 3 - Man Is Nature: Vessel of Time by Patrick Cabral
Area 4 - Variety Of The World: Helix by Baby and Coco Anne of B+C
Area 5 - Our Gift To The World: Produced by BBDO Guerrero Inc.
Area 6 - Go Lokal Store, Marahuyo Boutique And Travel Lounge
Area 7 - Imaginarium (Bridgeway) - The Transition Thematic: Limokon & Timamanukin by Riel Hilario
Area 7 - Imaginarium (Deck 1): Super Pastime by Dexter Fernandez
Area 7 - Imaginarium (Deck 2): Soaring High by Charlie Co
Area 7 - Imaginarium: Confluence of Wings by Abdulmari Toym Imao Jr.
Area 8 - The Mangrove Café by Razon's

Sustainability mandate

Aptly located in the Expo 2020's Sustainability District, Bangkóta is an actualisation of the Philippine government's drive to promote sustainability—with most materials sourced locally and are recyclable.

"The government shows its commitment to sustainability with this pavilion. Most of the materials are recyclable, and that they can be fully utilised in many years to come, because we will bring them back home for our fellow Filipinos to witness as well. We want to guarantee that we make prudent use of our people's money, so we are striving hard to achieve sustainability in the creation of Bangkóta," Lopez stressed.

Collaboration among Filipino artists

Filipino artistry and creativity are revealed in every facet of Bangkóta, giving Filipinos a reason to celebrate their identity, history, and talents.

Aside from Budji+Royal Architecture+Design and Marian Pastor Roces, the Philippines Creative Team assembles a powerful roster of talents based in both the Philippines and Dubai to deliver the Philippines Pavilion:

Dubai-based celebrated Filipino fashion designer Ezra Santos is the official outfitter of the Pavilion, and his team is creating sustainable uniforms to be worn by the pavilion's team of tour specialists that will reflect Filipino craftsmanship at the Expo.

Back in the Philippines, Filipino animation film producers Avid Liongoren and Manny Angeles under their advertising and animation studios Rocketsheep and Twenty Manila are responsible for the unique and meaningful teaser videos featuring Ube Boy—the official mascot of the Bangkóta—while multi-awarded creative agency BBDO Guerrero brings to life the centrepiece 180° film entitled "Our Gift to the World".

The pavilion's avant-garde musical score that permeates the exhibit areas, meanwhile, is created by National Artist Dr. Ramon Pagayon Santos. The Pavilion score wraps visitors in a unique sound scape created by a harmony of Philippine traditional instruments,

Young game developer James Palabay of Digital Art Chef created the Bangkóta Trivia Quest, a mobile game which allows the Filipinos' and the public to enjoy the BANGKOTA story in an engaging and interactive platform.

The Bangkóta experience includes cosmopolitan Go Lokal! and Marahuyo boutiques that break the stereotypes about Philippine products. The visitor is drawn in by creations that fuse modernity and practicality into well-crafted and well-designed world-class products. The items harmonize usefulness with artisanship. They offer multi-layered levels of product worthiness: as statements, as investments, and as comfort objects.

While Go Lokal! ventures onto the global stage with artisanal products exclusively designed for the Philippines Pavilion, Marahuyo is home to the most impressive collection of Filipino fashion designer brands.

Unyielding collaboration or Bayanihan: The identity of Filipinos

The Philippines Pavilion also aims to showcase the Filipino identity that focuses on dedicated collaborations or "bayanihan".

The concept of bayanihan, a Tagalog word that means teamwork, can be likened to a Filipino local community, wherein one can ask the neighbours for help, and the latter will readily extend assistance. Lopez said this has been greatly visible with the collective efforts between the Philippine team, the UAE-based construction team, as well as other multi-cultural and multinational entities involved in creating Bangkóta—noting that this time, 'bayanihan' is taking place on a global scale.

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