

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SIXTEEN CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1891



Introduced by Rep. Wilfrido Mark M. Enverga

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 1999, the government launched the “convergence strategy” as a mechanism to achieve institutional coordination and eventually success in rural development. The 2011-2016 Philippine Development Plan (PDP) reaffirmed the mechanism and objectives of the National Convergence Initiative towards more efficient use of resources.

Notwithstanding these policy pronouncements, the achievements of the “convergence strategy” have been limited for the past decades. More so, the implementing mechanisms and operational details have yet to be finalized by the three principal rural development agencies, i.e. Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), responsible for rural development. Much remains to be done to ensure that the plan itself is founded on successful experience in rural development, and is specified to a state that is operational and maybe monitored as to its achievements in institutional coordination—particularly in terms of the direct involvement of local government units (LGUs)—and success in sustainable rural development and poverty reduction.

The current institutional structure reveals a multiplicity of national government agencies presently involved in managing the development of agriculture, agrarian reform and natural resources. With no less than six departments, i.e., DA, DAR, DENR, DPWH, DOST, DTI and DILG, involved in sector development, functional overlaps, gaps, as well as fragmentation of responsibilities have become apparent in many areas, such as but not limited to:

1. Upland development and mangrove development and management (including enforcement of appropriate regulations on conversion of mangroves into fishponds provided under RA 8550) where there is a need to clearly delineate the scope of responsibilities between the DA and DENR;

2. Promotion of support services to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARB's) by DAR vis-à-vis DA's programs on increasing agricultural productivity;
3. Research and development, wherein current efforts in agriculture and fisheries are fragmented with the existence of the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Research on the one hand, and the DOST's PCARRD and PCAMRD on the other; and
4. Infrastructure development which involves various agencies such as the DPWH, DILG, DA, DAR, and the LGU's.

Institutional weaknesses also exist within the three principal rural development agencies.

Operations have become fragmented, thus weakening the impact of development activities on the intended beneficiaries. To mitigate the institutional coordination problems, the government has underlined in the last three PDP's that the three departments need to adopt and implement joint and complementary initiatives in the rural areas.

Indeed, various formal issuances over the tow decades or so, within individual departments and inter-departmental Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Understanding (MOU) among the three departments attest of their compliance to the broad development strategy. Yet despite these efforts at vertical and horizontal coordination, assessments of sector progress have time and again pointed to poor coordination as a serious institutional problems and constraint.

What is of particular concern is that there is no discussion nor even mention in the documentation of the process and procedures through which the lessons learned in the convergence sites are to be applied in the three departments-as whole departments. Typically, the departments deal with the convergence effort as just another project in specified areas where collaboration with other departments is required. While the departments have each allocated some resources and personnel to convergence-related activities in the identified model sites, the rest of their respective strategies, plans, budgets and operations in other parts of the country continue in their "unconverged" states.

More specifically, the departments have assigned specific officials and personnel to the Steering Committee and Technical Working Group at the national level. Specific personnel have been assigned to convergence activities at the regional level. Specific "area investment plans", consisting of a set of projects, are being identified and reviewed for the model sites. Yet these assignments and activities only comprise but a negligible proportion

of the resources and more importantly, the mind set of the three departments. **Convergence is more of an attitude and a modus operandi, not a set of projects.**

More telling is the fact that there are no major changes in the budgetary presentations of each of the three departments that are attributable to the convergence framework. While the supporting presentations of the three departments made mention of the convergence strategy, such pronouncement have not been translated into any significant budget reallocations that indicate the actual and sustained reallocation of resources to achieve true integration of development and service goals and activities.

The current design of the convergence framework as reflected in available documents provides nominal attention to the integrative and local development governance role of the LGUs. Note that the criteria for the selection of sites were wholly national in origin. The ongoing design, appraisal, decision-making and resource mobilization of projects is wholly national-based.

Finally, the framework does not provide for the selection of sites were wholly national in origin. The ongoing design, appraisal, decision –making and resource mobilization of projects is wholly national-based. Finally, the framework does not provide for any activities which build the capacity of the LGUs to perform the tasks associated with the achievement of sustainable rural development.

In summary, the institutionalizing the convergence framework, Congress hopes to bring the efforts of the three key departments to bear on the challenge of rural development-and ultimately contribute to the betterment of the quality of life in the countryside.

In view of the foregoing, approval of the Bill is earnestly sought.



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1 primordial consideration in the implementation of the Convergence Initiative;

- 2 (e) Convergence shall be mainstreamed in all programs, projects and activities of the national
3 government agencies and concerned LGUs;
- 4 (e) Funds for the Convergence Initiative shall form part of the Work and Financial Plan of each
5 Department to effectively and efficiently carry out convergence activities;
- 6 (f) Networking and linking with other government entities such as, but not limited to, the
7 Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), State
8 Colleges and Universities (SUCs), and Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations
9 (GOCCs), shall be undertaken by the three rural development agencies for coverage of potential
10 areas under the Convergence Initiative for agribusiness development;
- 11 (g) Instituting relevant measures for an enabling environment to encourage investment by the private
12 sector.
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14 **SEC. 3. Scope.** This Act shall apply to all rural development areas primarily inhabited by the convergence
15 initiative program's targeted beneficiaries - the marginalized farmers (both agrarian reform beneficiaries and
16 non-agrarian reform beneficiaries), the fisherfolks and the upland dwellers.

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18 CHAPTER II

19 DEFINITIONS

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21 **SEC. 4. Definition of Terms.** As used in and for purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

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- 23 (a) Agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) refer to farmers who were granted lands under Presidential
24 Decree No. 27, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law and Republic Act No. 9700 or the
25 "Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Extension with Reforms" and regular farm workers who are
26 landless, irrespective of tenurial arrangement;
- 27 (b) Agricultural lands refer to lands devoted to or suitable for agricultural activity and not classified
28 by law as mineral, forest, residential, commercial or industrial land;
- 29 (c) Agro-based cluster refers to the concentration of producers, agribusiness and institutions that are
30 engaged in the same agricultural or agro-industrial sub-sector, and inter-connect
- 31 (d) Coastal areas refer to a band of dry land and the adjacent ocean space (water and submerged land)
32 in which terrestrial processes and uses directly affect oceanic process and uses, and vice versa.
33 For purposes of initiating and implementing the convergence initiative, it shall include
34 foreshoreland;
- 35 (e) Ecosystem refers to the complex relationships among the living resources, habitats, and residents
36 of an area. It includes plants, trees, animals, fish, birds, micro-organisms, water, soil, and people;
- 37 (f) Enhanced national convergence initiative (Enhanced NCI) refers to the national convergence
38 initiative strategy provided for under DA-DAR-DENR Joint Memorandum Circular No. 01,
39 Series of 2010;
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- (g) Farmers refer to natural persons whose primary livelihood is cultivation of land or the production of agricultural crops, agroforest products, livestock and/or fisheries, either by himself/herself, or primarily with the assistance of his/her immediate farm household, whether the land is owned by him/her or by another person under a leasehold or share tenancy agreement or arrangement with the owner thereof;
- (h) Fisherfolks refer to people directly or personally and physically engaged in taking and/or culturing and processing fishery and/or aquatic resources;
- (i) Good agricultural practices refers to applying available knowledge to addressing environmental, economic and social sustainability dimensions for on-farm production and post-production processes, resulting in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products;
- (j) Local government units refer to government units at the sub-national level or government units at the regional, provincial and municipal levels;
- (k) Mangrove forests refer to silt-rich, saline (brackish water) habitat generally found along large rivers, deltas, and estuaries in the coastal areas. It is characterized by low tree diversity with a low broken canopy. It serves as barrier to strong tidal waves and habitat of various aquatic species;
- (l) Primary forests or old growth forests refer to untouched, pristine forest that exists in its original condition and has been relatively unaffected by human activity;
- (m) Ridge-to-Reef strategy refers to the development approach to improve the lives of the ARBs and small farmers, indigenous peoples, marginalized dwellers and fisherfolks (that is from upland and forest areas, in middle and lowland areas, down to the coastal areas);
- (n) Rural development agencies refer to the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources;
- (o) Strategic Agricultural and Fisheries Development Zones (SAFDZ) refer to areas within the Network of Protected Areas for Agricultural and Agro-industrial Development (NPAAAD) identified for production, agro-processing and marketing activities to help develop and modernize, with the support of the government, the agriculture and fisheries sectors, in an environmentally and socio-culturally sound manner;
- (p) Secondary growth forests refer to the largest and most dynamic natural forest ecosystem in the Philippines. For purposes of this Act, it shall refer to as an area which has been disturbed in some way, naturally or unnaturally created in a number of ways from degraded forest recovering from selective logging to areas cleared by slash-and-burn agriculture or "kaingin" that have been reclaimed by forest. It also characterized by a less developed canopy structure, smaller trees, and less diversity;
- (q) Sustainable rural development refers to the development objective of meeting the needs of the present generation in the rural communities, without compromising the the ability of future generations to meet their own needs consistent with the principles of social equity, efficiency and environmental integrity;
- (r) Upland/forest ecosystems refer to areas with at least 18% slope. For purposes of this Act, it shall also refer to an area that provides ecological benefits and support to agricultural production, industries, water, and power needs. Timber production as well as agroforestry activities may be promoted in these areas to maximize their utilization;

- (s) Watershed refers to a topographically delineated area of land from which rainwater can drain as surface run-off vis-à-vis a specific stream or river system to a common outlet point which may be a dam, irrigation system or urban water supply take-of point, or where the stream discharges into a river, lake or the sea;

CHAPTER III PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

SEC. 5. Guiding Framework. The convergence strategy shall adopt the watershed and ecosystem management approach as the intervention framework in the convergence areas. This is primarily because the convergence strategy is an environmentally sustainable approach to development as human interventions in the forest and upland areas would impact on the lowland areas, and this in turn would affect the coastal and marine areas. Selection of convergence zones shall likewise take into consideration the SAFDZ provision of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) of 1997.

SEC. 6. Criteria for Selection of Convergence Areas. The following criteria shall guide the selection of convergence for the agro-enterprise cluster:

- (a) Completeness of ecosystem zones. The convergence sites should cut across the various ecosystems or should be a combination of two or more ecosystems;
- (b) Key production zones, agrarian reform communities (ARCs) and clusters with connectivity for increased productivity and income. The convergence sites should be current key production areas or with potential to substantially expand and scale-up production. As such, the area may transform; from mono-cropping to integrated, multi-cropping or high value farming system. In terms of connectivity, the key production zone may be linked with surrounding areas for allied industries/services or for backward linkages;
- (c) Combination of sites across major poverty groups. The convergence sites must cover a significant number of small farmers/agricultural workers including potential and current ARB, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples, and rural women;
- (d) Presence of development-oriented local government leaders and LGU alliances? The convergence sites should have LGUs and LCEs (Local Chief Executives) that share a common perspective in rural development and are willing to support the convergence initiative;
- (e) Presence of NGOs, POs, private sector and academic/research community. The convergence sites should have active POs and/or NGOs that are willing to support the convergence initiative. Presence of private/business and academic/research institutions who are willing to partner within the convergence framework shall be an advantage.

CHAPTER IV

NCI TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS (TWGs) AND COMPONENTS

SEC. 8. *Technical Working Groups of NCI.* The implementation of the NCI shall be done through Technical Working Groups along ecosystem. The three working groups shall be mutually re-enforcing and are equally important in ensuring that the objectives are achieved and is seen to improve institutional efficiencies in the governance of sustainable rural development.

(a) **TWG on Coastal and Marine Resources Management-** shall address the issues and concerns on pertaining to the use and management of coral reefs, sea grasses and alga beds, brackish wetland areas, mangroves and beach forest ecosystems. The TWG shall compose of concerned agencies/units of the Departments of Agriculture (DA), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Interior and Local Government (DILG). Other government agencies, Non-Government and Peoples Organizations, academe, private sector or business groups/associations may also be part of the TWG whenever necessary.

(b) **TWG on Lowland Sustainable Agriculture-** shall address issues and concerns on the use and management of the agricultural ecosystems through application of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). The TWG shall compose of concerned agencies/units of the Department Of Agriculture (DA), Agrarian Reform (DAR), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Interior and Local Government (DILG). Other government agencies, Non-Government and Peoples Organizations, academe, private sector or business groups/associations may also be part of the TWG whenever necessary.

Sec.9. *Components and Outputs of the NCI.* The following shall serve as cross cutting components of the three TWGs;

(a) **Policy and Advisory.** The component shall address the issues and problems of conflictng, overlapping, and other unlear policies related to land administration, regulatory, framework, operational strategies and jurisdictional boundaries.

(b) **Agro-Enterprise and Agribusiness Development.** The component shall facilitate enterprise development and agribusiness within the convergence sites though the establishment of agro-enterprises clusters in all provinces. These clusters shall be the focus for agribusiness initiatives based on the potential of the areas especially those designated as strategic zones as identified by the SAFDZ maps.

(c) **Capacity Development.** The component shall ensure the organziational preparedness of the three agencies and capability of the implementers and other stakeholders to implement the convergence initiative.

(d) **Knowledge Management.** The component shall ensure that NCI programs, projects and initiatives are implemented and monitored in an efficient and effective manner. It shall likewise ensure that innovations are documented for possible adoption, expansion and scaling up.

CHAPTER V IMPLEMENTING STRUCTURE AND MECHANISM

Article One National Policy Administration

SEC. 12. *Creation of the National Convergence Initiative Administration (NCIA).* The National Convergence Initiative Administration is hereby created. The NCIA, which shall be the primary coordinating body of the NCI program shall be under the Department of Agriculture (DA). As a primary coordinating body it shall also be the convenor of the current National Convergence Initiative -Technical Working Group (NCI-TWG).

SEC. 12-A. *Composition.* Aside from the Administrator, the TWG to be convened by the NCIA shall have the following members:

- (a) Administrator
- (b) Deputy Administrator
- (c) Chairperson, TWG on Coastal and Marine Resources Management
- (d) Chairperson, TWG on Lowland Resources Management
- (e) Chairperson, TWG on Forestry and Upland Development
- (f) Chairperson, TWG on Policy and Advocacy
- (g) Chairperson, Working Group on Agro-Enterprise Development
- (h) Chairperson, Working Group on Knowledge Management
- (i) Chairperson, Working Group on Capacity Development
- (j) Convergence Focal Person, DA
- (k) Convergence Focal Person, DAR
- (l) Convergence Focal Person, DENR
- (m) Head, NCI Secretariat

SEC.12-B. *Powers and Functions of the NCIA.* The NCIA shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) Formulate sustainable rural development framework and recommend to the Board (Section 13) necessary adjustments.
- (b) Integrate, harmonize and oversee the implementation of the convergence initiative plans and programs of the sub-national TWGs.
- (c) Recommend to the Executive Board the operational plans, programs, and guidelines relevant to

1 the NCI Framework;

- 2 (d) Mobilize concerned personnel to actively participate in various activities relative to the
3 Convergence Initiative;
- 4 (e) Thoroughly evaluate memorandum of agreements and other agreements;
- 5 (f) Facilitate the formation of Convergence teams together with other concerned stakeholders;
- 6 (g) Monitor and evaluate the progress of implementation of Convergence projects/activities;
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8 **SEC. 12-C. *Powers and Functions of the NCIA Administrator.*** The Administrator shall also have
9 the following powers and functions:

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- 11 (a) Act as the executive head of the of the NCIA and Secretary of the Board and perform the powers
12 and functions incident to the said positions;
- 13 (b) Be responsible for the implementation and overall execution of the policies, rules and regulations
14 and decisions adopted by the Board and as such, shall issue the corresponding implementing
15 administrative issuances and promulgate opinions and interpretative circulars and rulings to
16 ensure expeditious and effective implementation thereof;
- 17 (c) Approve plans and programs prepared by the Regional, Provincial and Municipal Convergence
18 Initiative Technical Working Group;
- 19 (d) Review fulfillment of the commitment of the respective agencies related to the implementation of
20 the NCI; and
- 21 (e) Perform other powers and functions as may be inherent, incident, or related to the foregoing.
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23 **SEC. 12-C. *Qualifications of the Administrator.*** The Administrator must have a background or
24 significant training preferably in the field of economics, agriculture, agribusiness, land resources
25 management, and development planning and management for a period of at least five (5) years. The
26 Administrator shall be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines and shall have
27 the rank of an Undersecretary.

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29 **SEC.12-D. *Deputy Administrator.*** The Administrator shall be assisted by a Deputy Administrator
30 who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon the Board's recommendation. The
31 Deputy Administrator shall have the same qualifications as the Administrator and shall have the rank
32 of an Assistant Secretary.

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34 The Deputy Administrator shall be the operational and administrative manager of the NCIA and shall
35 assist the administrator in routine housekeeping functions.

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37 **SEC.13. *NCIA Executive Board.*** The NCIA shall have an Executive Board hereinafter referred to as the
38 Board which shall act as the policy making body of the NCI. The shall also direct the implementation of the
39 provisions of this Act.

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1 **SEC. 13-A. *Composition.*** The Board shall be composed of five (5) voting members.

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- 3 (a) The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) as Chairperson;
- 4 (b) The Secretaries of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the
- 5 Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) as Vice Chairpersons;
- 6 (c) The Secretaries of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Department
- 7 of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the Director-General for the National Economic
- 8 Development Agency as members; (optional)
- 9 (d) A representative/s from the small farmers (agrarian and non-agrarian reform beneficiaries), fisher
- 10 folks and marginalized upland dwellers which shall be appointed by the President of the Republic
- 11 of the Philippines; (optional)
- 12 (e) The Administrator of NCIA, as ex-officio member, who shall likewise act as Secretary to the
- 13 Board.

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15 The Secretaries may appoint their respective alternate representatives with a rank of not less than an

16 Undersecretary.

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18 **SEC.13-B. *Powers and Functions.*** The NCIA Executive Board shall assume the following powers

19 and functions of the current National Steering Committee, namely:

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- 21 (a) Provide overall policy directions for the implementation of programs/projects and other related
- 22 activities under the NCI;
- 23 (b) Approve/ratify implementing rules and regulations, programs, projects and plans pertaining to the
- 24 operation of the NCI;
- 25 (c) Consult with other concerned national government agencies, stakeholders, and partner agencies
- 26 on policies and major programs related to sustainable rural development;
- 27 (d) Approve of Memorandum of Agreements with investors and funding agencies being
- 28 recommended for approval by the NCIA;
- 29 (e) Regularly advise the President on all matters concerning the implementation of convergence
- 30 initiative strategies;

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32 **SEC. 13-C. *Meetings.*** The Board shall meet on a monthly basis and may hold special meetings as

33 deemed necessary. However, hosting of NSC meetings may be done in rotation amongst the three

34 rural development agencies.

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36 **SEC.14. *Technical Working Groups and Components of the NCI-TWG.*** The Administrator shall convene

37 the members of the respective Working Groups to elect amongst them the Chairperson for each Working

38 Group. The Chairperson of each Working Group shall then designate or appoint a Coordinator from their

39 respective agency. The functions and composition of the Technical Working Groups and Components shall

40 remain in force until revised by the NCIA Board.

1 **SEC. 15. *Convergence Focal Person.*** Each agency shall designate a Convergence Focal Person who shall
2 be responsible for the coordination and management of the convergence program in their respective agency
3 (national and field levels). The agency Convergence Focal Person shall likewise be a member of the NCIA
4 TWG. The agency Convergence Focal Person shall work closely with the NCI Secretariat for effective
5 coordination of concerns of NCI and the working groups relative to their respective agency.

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7 **SEC. 16. *National Convergence Initiative Secretariat.*** The Board shall appoint the Head of the NCI
8 Secretariat with the Coordinators of each of the Working Groups as members. There will also be permanent
9 members of the Secretariat coming from the three agencies on top of the coordinators of each working group.
10 The NCI Secretariat shall work closely with the NCIA Administrator, the Chairperson of the different
11 Working Groups and the agency Convergence Focal Person.

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13 **SEC.16-A. *Functions of the NCI Secretariat.*** The NCI Secretariat shall:

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15 (a) Implement approved plans and projects;
16 (b) Facilitate the provision of administrative and logistics support to the Board and the NCIA;
17 (c) Ensure that appropriate actions are taken on agreements reached during meetings/workshops;
18 (d) Submit monitoring/progress reports to the Board through the NCIA and to other oversight bodies;
19 (e) Work closely with the NCIA and the Working Groups;
20 (f) Together with the NCIA Administrator, convene the members of each Working Group and
21 conduct election for the Chair of the Working Groups;
22 (g) Maintain effective and efficient data management system of the NCI.

23
24 **Article Two**
25 **Sub-National Level Administration**
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27 **SEC.17. *Regional Convergence Initiative –Technical Working Group (RCI-TWG).*** Parallel to the NCI-
28 TWG, the RCI-TWG shall manage and supervise the programs, projects, and other related activities at the
29 regional level. The RCI-TWG shall be the regional arm of the NCIA in carrying out its functions.

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31 **SEC. 17-A. *Duties and Responsibilities.***
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- 33 (a) Work closely with other government line agencies and offices and with the Regional
34 Development Council (RDC) and concerned Provincial Development Council (PDC) to ensure
35 that the enhanced convergence initiative interventions are aligned with the regional development
36 agenda and initiatives;
37 (b) Facilitate complementation of efforts and resources for greater impact;
38 (c) Coordinate and work closely with the Provincial Local Government Units (Plus) in the
39 implementation of the NCI plans, programs, projects, and other related activities. The Regional
40 Directors of DA, DAR, and DENR may enter into an agreement with the Provincial Governor or
41 LGU leagues, as necessary;

(d) Meet monthly or as deemed necessary.

SEC. 17-B. *Composition of the RCI-TWG.* The RCI-TWG shall be composed of:

- (a) DA, DAR or DENR Regional Director as Chairperson;
- (b) Depending on the result of the election, the two latter directors will act as Co-Chairpersons;
- (c) Regional Focal Persons for all the departments and Head RCI-TWG Secretariat as Members

The chairperson of the RCI-TWG shall be a convergence champion and shall be decided by and among the Regional Directors of DA, DAR and DENR. Upon the completion of the RCI-TWG composition, a resolution to that effect shall be submitted to the NCI Secretariat. Membership of the RCI-TWG may be expanded to include representatives from the Provincial LGUs and other agencies as deemed necessary.

The RCI-Secretariat shall be created and would be composed of representatives from the regional offices of DA, DAR, and DENR. The RCI Secretariat shall be headed by the Regional Focal Person. The Regional Focal Person shall be designated by the chairperson of RCI-TWG (from the agency where the chairperson belongs).

SEC.18. *Provincial Convergence Initiative Technical Working Group (PCI-TWG).* The PCI-TWG shall be responsible in implementing plans, programs, projects, and other related activities of the NCI at their respective provinces in collaboration with RCI-TWG. The PCI-TWG shall identify or determine appropriate interventions, resources, and support services needed such as, but not limited to infrastructure, logistics, extension, inputs, lands, and institutional development for the implementation of the NCI plans and programs.

The chairperson of the PCI-TWG shall be agreed upon by the provincial members and shall be a choice between the provincial head of DAR or of DENR. The Governor of the province shall be the co-chairperson. The members of the PCI-TWG are the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO), Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer (PARO), Provincial Agriculture Officer (PAO), and Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator (PPDC), and Provincial Government-Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PG-ENRO).

The respective interface mechanisms shall be LGU-led with DA, DAR, and DENR providing technical and operational support. Existing LGU mechanisms may be adopted to spearhead or manage the convergence initiatives at the LGU level.

SEC.19. *Municipal Convergence Initiative Technical Working Group (MCI-TWG).* The MCI-TWG shall be responsible in implementing plans, programs, projects, and other related activities of the NCI at their respective municipalities in collaboration with the PCI-TWG. The MCI-TWG shall identify or determine appropriate interventions, resources, and support services needed such as, but not limited to, infrastructure, logistics, extension, inputs, lands, and institutional development for the implementation of the NCI plans and programs.

The chairperson of the MCI-TWG shall be agreed upon by the municipal members and shall be a choice between the Municipal Agrarian Reform Officer (MARO) or the Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO). The Mayor of the municipality shall be the co-chairperson. The members of the MCI-TWG are the Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO), City/Municipal Environment and Natural Resource Officer (C/MENRO), Municipal Agrarian Reform Officer (MARO), Municipal Agriculture Officer (MAO) and concerned City/Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator (C/MPDC).

The respective interface mechanisms shall be LGU-led with DA, DAR, and DENR providing technical and operational support. Existing LGU mechanisms may be adopted to spearhead or manage the convergence initiatives at the LGU level.

Article Three

Other National Government Agencies and Local Government Units

SEC. 20. *Scope and Nature of Support from Government Line Agencies and Offices.* The NCIA shall work closely with other government line agencies and offices to ensure complementation and alignment of NCI interventions with that of other related agencies and offices. Conversely, all concerned NG agencies/bodies shall render technical and administrative support if called upon by the NCIA relative to the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 21. *Local Government Units.* The Local Government Units which have the mandate to coordinate and manage local development shall take an active role in the implementation of an institutionalized convergence strategy especially on the identification and stewardship of agro-industrial cluster sites.

CHAPTER VI

TRANSITORY AND FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 22. *Convening of the NCIA.* Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall convene the NCIA. The current head of the enhanced National Convergence Initiative Secretariat shall sit temporarily as Administrator and ex-officio member of the NCIA Executive Board until such time that a regular Administrator has been appointed by the President.

1 **SEC. 23. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** Within sixty (60) days from effectivity of this Act, the
2 NCIA shall promulgate the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act. Said rules and
3 regulations shall be submitted to the Congressional Oversight Committee on the National Conversion
4 Initiative (COCNIA) for approval.

5
6 **SEC. 24. *Congressional Oversight Committee on the National Conversion Initiative.*** There is hereby
7 created a Congressional Oversight Committee composed of five members each from the Committee on
8 Agriculture of the Senate of the Philippines and the Committee on Rural Development of the House of
9 Representatives. The members from the Senate shall be appointed by the Senate President based on
10 proportional representation of the parties or coalitions therein with at least two (2) senators representing the
11 minority. The members from the House of Representatives shall be appointed by the Speaker also based on
12 proportional representation of the parties or coalitions therein with at least two (2) congressmen representing
13 the minority.

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15 The oversight committee which shall function for a period of not more than five (5) years, shall have the
16 power to review the implementing rules issued by NCIA within thirty (30) days from the promulgation of the
17 said rules and oversee the implementation of this Act: Provided, That the Secretariat of the Oversight
18 Committee shall be drawn from the existing Secretariat personnel of the committees comprising the
19 oversight.

20
21 Funding shall be taken from the appropriations of both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

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23 **SEC. 25. *Effectivity of the Creation of the NCIA.*** Until such time that the NCIA has been organized and
24 fully operational, the current operational set-up on the NCI as provided for under DA-DAR-DENR Joint
25 Memorandum Circular No. 1, Series of 2010 shall continue. Hiring, separation, replacement, and
26 appointment of personnel shall be in accordance with existing Civil Service rules and regulations.

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28 **SEC. 26. *Structure and Staffing Pattern.*** Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the
29 NCIA Board Chairperson shall formulate and submit to the Congressional oversight Committee for its
30 review and approval the NCIA's proposed organizational structure and staffing pattern. After such review
31 and approval, the proposed organizational structure and staffing pattern of the NCIA shall be submitted to
32 the President for final approval through the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) within ninety
33 (90) days.

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35 **SEC. 27. *Appropriations.*** Funds necessary to carry out the implementation of the NCI shall be taken from
36 the available funds of the three rural development agencies under the current General Appropriations Act.
37 Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its staggered implementation shall be included in the annual
38 General Appropriations Act.

39
40 Other sources of funds such as grants, donations, and other forms of assistance from donor agencies and
41 other public or private entities may be tapped and facilitated by NCI Board and/or the NCIA to support the

1 program, subject to regular auditing guidelines and procedures. Cost-sharing or counter- parting schemes
2 among national government and LGUs is also encouraged to support the implementation of the Convergence
3 Initiative.

4
5 **SEC. 28. *Non-Impairment Clause.*** Nothing in this Act shall be construed as to diminish, impair, or repeal
6 rights recognized, granted, or available to marginalized or basic sectors under existing laws including but not
7 limited to Republic Act Nos. 8371, 8550 and 6657.

8
9 **SEC. 29. *Separability Clause.*** If for any reason or reasons, any part or provision of this Act shall be
10 declared or held to be unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof, which are not affected
11 thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

12
13 **SEC.30. *Effectivity Clause.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official
14 Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

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16 *Approved,*
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