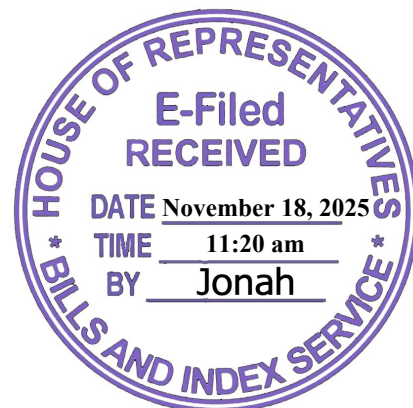


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6101



Introduced by:

HON. CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines continues to face frequent natural disasters that cause widespread destruction—damaging homes, infrastructure, and livelihoods, and slowing down economic progress. Eastern Visayas has been repeatedly affected by these disasters. Typhoon Yolanda in 2013 caused catastrophic damage across the region. This was followed by Typhoon Odette in 2021 and Typhoon Tino in 2025, which again devastated communities and set back development efforts. As a result, the region continues to struggle with poverty, displacement, and slow economic recovery.

Given these repeated challenges, Eastern Visayas urgently needs stronger and more coordinated efforts to reduce disaster risks, improve governance, and support long-term growth. Focused leadership and integrated planning are essential to help the region rebuild more effectively and become more resilient.

This bill therefore proposes the creation of the Eastern Visayas Development Authority (EVDA). The EVDA will be responsible for preparing the Eastern Visayas Development Master Plan, which will guide the region's balanced, accelerated, and sustainable development. It will also ensure active participation from all sectors to support the socio-economic advancement of the region.

Through this measure, the EVDA is envisioned to provide clear strategic direction and lasting solutions for the long-term development of Eastern Visayas. In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

In view of the foregoing, **ug sa ngalan sa SERBISYONG TINUORAY**, the undersigned respectfully requests the immediate passage of this measure.


CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP
Representative, Second District of Southern Leyte

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HOUSE BILL NO. 6101

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HON. CHRISTOPHERSON “COCO” M. YAP

AN ACT
CREATING THE EASTERN VISAYAS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EVDA),
DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. — This Act shall be known as the “Eastern Visayas Development Authority (EVDA) Act.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is the policy of the State to promote and accelerate the sound, balanced, and sustainable industrial, economic, and social development of Eastern Visayas; to ensure the region’s disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, and post-calamity rehabilitation; and to increase trade, tourism, and investments by encouraging private enterprise and strengthening coordination among national and local government units (LGUs), the private sector, and civil society. The State shall foster job creation, rural productivity, and higher household incomes in Eastern Visayas consistent with national development plans and policies.

To this end, an effective institutional mechanism shall be established to coordinate and integrate planning, investment programming, and implementation of priority programs, activities, and projects in Eastern Visayas, including the possible establishment of special economic zones strictly in accordance with applicable laws.

SECTION 3. Creation and Nature. — There is hereby created the Eastern Visayas Development Authority, hereinafter referred to as the Authority or EVDA, which shall promote, coordinate, and facilitate the active and extensive participation of all sectors in the socio-economic development of Eastern Visayas. The Authority shall be a government instrumentality with corporate powers, possessing juridical personality, as well as fiscal and administrative autonomy, attached to the Office of the President for purposes of policy supervision.

SECTION 4. Coverage. — The Authority's area of coverage shall consist of the Provinces of Northern Samar, Eastern Samar, Samar, Leyte, Biliran, and Southern Leyte; the Highly Urbanized City of Tacloban; and the Independent Component City of Ormoc, including all component cities and municipalities therein.

SECTION 5. Principal Office and Satellite Offices. — The principal office of the Authority shall be in Tacloban City. When necessary to achieve the objectives of this Act, the Authority may establish satellite offices within Eastern Visayas and a liaison office in Metro Manila.

SECTION 6. Purposes and Objectives. — The Authority shall pursue the following:

- (a) Promote regional development by initiating or undertaking, alone or in partnership, development and business projects of corporate or economic nature in agriculture and fisheries, public works and infrastructure, energy and power, public utilities, land and estate development, manufacturing, services, and sustainable natural resources management, consistent with applicable laws;
- (b) Integrate government and private sector efforts and resources for sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient growth, aligned with the Philippine Development Plan (PDP), the Regional Development Plan (RDP), and relevant post-disaster rehabilitation and recovery plans;
- (c) Facilitate investments that enhance economic development and competitiveness in the region;
- (d) Serve as a model for comprehensive regional industrialization and agricultural modernization that respects LGU autonomy and complements national policies.

SECTION 7. Powers and Functions. — To accomplish its purposes, the Authority shall:

- (a) Formulate an integrated, long-term regional development framework and investment program for Eastern Visayas, aligned with national plans;
- (b) Provide strategic direction for the region's economic transformation and resilience, including value chain development and human capital formation;
- (c) Integrate, prioritize, program, and, when authorized by law, implement specific programs, activities, and projects (PAPs) within Eastern Visayas, including official development assistance (ODA) PAPs, subject to applicable laws, rules, and regulations;
- (d) Recommend to, and when necessary call upon, national government agencies (NGAs), government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs), and other instrumentalities to provide technical support and prioritization in the implementation of agricultural, industrial, commercial, infrastructure, environmental, tourism, digital, and technology PAPs;
- (e) Advocate policies that foster integrated and balanced regional development;
- (f) Promote and facilitate investments to uplift living standards, in close coordination with agencies primarily mandated to undertake such functions;
- (g) Identify and mobilize financing for priority PAPs, including budgetary appropriations, ODA, grants, blended finance, and public-private partnerships (PPPs), consistent with law;
- (h) Coordinate and facilitate planning, management, and technical assistance to prospective and existing investors, complementing the mandates of investment promotion and regulatory agencies;
- (i) Establish and manage a comprehensive regional data system to support evidence-based planning, investment programming, monitoring, and evaluation, consistent with data privacy and interoperability standards;
- (j) Serve as a coordinating and advisory body for PAPs requiring permits, licenses, leases, franchises, or concessions from NGAs and LGUs by issuing non-binding endorsements, comments, or no-objection statements as may be required by law; Provided, That this shall not diminish or supplant the mandates or permitting powers of NGAs and LGUs;

- (k) Negotiate and enter into consultancy and management services agreements for the planning and implementation of development PAPs, subject to procurement, budgeting, and auditing laws;
- (l) Request the detail or secondment of personnel from NGAs and LGUs, with the consent of the head of agency, subject to civil service, budgeting, and auditing rules;
- (m) Conduct, commission, or support research and development, pilots, and innovation programs to increase productivity and climate resilience;
- (n) Organize or support cooperative ventures in agriculture, industry, tourism, services, and commerce, and assist them in accessing appropriate finance;
- (o) Monitor, evaluate, and recommend improvements in the implementation of region-wide PAPs, and publish regular monitoring reports;
- (p) Establish mechanisms to ensure the timely implementation of region-wide PAPs, including PPPs, in coordination with the PPP Center and relevant NGAs;
- (q) Review and endorse to the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board, as appropriate, PAPs proposed by NGAs, LGUs, and development partners for implementation in Eastern Visayas, without prejudice to existing review and approval processes;
- (r) Recommend the establishment of special economic zones in Eastern Visayas, in accordance with Republic Act No. 7916, as amended, and in coordination with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) and other relevant agencies; Provided, That EVDA shall not itself grant tax or non-tax incentives;
- (s) Interface with development partners, consistent with NEDA's ODA policies, to obtain financing support, grants, and donations for regional PAPs;
- (t) Receive and administer donations, contributions, grants, bequests, or gifts, in cash or in kind, from domestic or foreign sources, subject to applicable laws, rules, and regulations;

- (u) Sue and be sued; enter into contracts; acquire, hold, lease, transfer, and dispose of real and personal property necessary for its purposes, subject to applicable laws; and
- (v) Perform such other acts as are necessary, proper, or incidental to attain the objectives of this Act.

In carrying out these functions, the Authority shall consult and coordinate with the Eastern Visayas Regional Development Council (RDC), local development councils, NGAs, LGUs, people's organizations, non-government organizations, academe, and the private sector. The EVDA Chairperson shall submit to the President and to both Houses of Congress an annual report on EVDA's accomplishments, PAPs, use of funds, and audited financial statements.

SECTION 8. Board of Directors; Composition; Qualifications; Term. — The Authority shall be governed by a Board of Directors (the Board) that shall set overall policy directions and approve major plans and programs. The Board shall be composed of:

- (a) The Chairperson, appointed by the President of the Philippines;
- (b) The Chairperson of the Eastern Visayas RDC, as ex officio member;
- (c) One (1) representative of the League of Provinces of the Philippines from Eastern Visayas, nominated by the Governors of the six (6) provinces, rotating every two (2) years;
- (d) One (1) representative of the League of Cities of the Philippines from Eastern Visayas, nominated by the City Mayors of Tacloban and Ormoc, alternating every two (2) years;
- (e) One (1) representative of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines–Eastern Visayas Chapter, nominated by its Regional Council;
- (f) Three (3) private sector representatives (PSRs) from Eastern Visayas, appointed by the President upon Board recommendation: one (1) from the business sector, one (1) from the academe, and one (1) from the non-government sector.

The PSRs shall serve for six (6) years; Provided, That upon initial appointment, one shall serve for two (2) years, another for four (4) years, and the third for

six (6) years; and Provided, further, That they shall hold office until their successors are appointed. Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term.

Members of Congress representing Eastern Visayas may attend Board meetings as non-voting resource persons upon invitation. Nothing herein shall be construed to confer on legislators any executive or administrative function.

Board members shall be entitled only to reasonable per diems and reimbursements for actual and necessary expenses, subject to applicable laws and regulations.

SECTION 9. Powers and Duties of the Board. — The Board shall:

- (a) Approve the regional development framework, medium-term plan, investment program, annual work and financial plans, and major PAPs of EVDA;
- (b) Ensure consistency of EVDA's goals and policies with national, regional, and local plans;
- (c) Approve internal policies on governance, risk management, procurement, and safeguards;
- (d) Mobilize financing for region-wide priorities;
- (e) Create committees or task forces as necessary, including audit and risk, governance and nomination, and investment/program committees;
- (f) Approve rules on Board meetings, quorum (majority of all voting members), and voting procedures; and
- (g) Exercise such other powers as are necessary to carry out this Act.

SECTION 10. Executive Committee. — The Board shall constitute an Executive Committee to act on urgent matters when the Board is not in session, subject to ratification at the next Board meeting. It shall be composed of: (a) the EVDA Chairperson, as Head; (b) the RDC Chairperson; (c) the PSR for business; (d) the PSR for academe; and (e) the PSR for the non-government sector.

SECTION 11. Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer. — The Chairperson shall be appointed by the President, with the rank of Undersecretary, and shall serve as Chief Executive Officer for a term of six (6) years unless sooner removed for cause.

The Chairperson must be a Filipino citizen, of good moral character, with proven probity and integrity, holding a degree in economics, business, public administration, law, management, or related fields, and with at least five (5) years of relevant managerial experience; Provided, That the appointee shall have been a resident of Eastern Visayas for at least five (5) years immediately preceding appointment.

The Chairperson shall:

- (a) Preside over Board meetings and ensure proper implementation of Board policies and approved PAPs;
- (b) Engage technical experts for planning and program implementation, and oversee the preparation of plans, investment programs, and reports;
- (c) Identify solutions to key issues, considering risks and stakeholder impacts, in coordination with the Board and key stakeholders;
- (d) Advocate EVDA's plans and programs among stakeholders and partners;
- (e) Call on NGAs, LGUs, and other stakeholders to address issues in implementing major PAPs;
- (f) Supervise monitoring and ensure timely implementation of region-wide PAPs;
- (g) Elevate to the Board policy recommendations, plans, and programs;
- (h) Accept, on behalf of EVDA, donations and grants consistent with this Act;
- (i) Oversee administrative operations, budget execution, and disbursements, subject to budgeting, accounting, and auditing rules, and submit required reports;
- (j) Implement Board-approved policies and measures;
- (k) Appoint, remove, or discipline EVDA personnel for cause, consistent with civil service rules;
- (l) Represent EVDA before government offices and the public;
- (m) Sign agreements and contracts on behalf of EVDA; and

- (n) Perform such other duties as the Board may assign consistent with this Act.

SECTION 12. Deputy Chairperson. — The Chairperson shall be assisted by one (1) Deputy Chairperson, appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Chairperson, with the rank of Assistant Secretary. The Deputy Chairperson shall have the same qualifications as the Chairperson and shall perform duties assigned by the Chairperson or provided by law.

SECTION 13. Executive Director. — The President shall appoint an Executive Director upon recommendation of the Chairperson. The Executive Director must be a Filipino citizen, of good moral character, with proven probity and integrity, holding a degree in economics, business, public administration, law, management, or related fields, with at least five (5) years relevant experience, and possessing the requisite eligibility for third level career service position pursuant to the career executive service rules; Provided, That the appointee shall have been a resident of Eastern Visayas for at least five (5) years prior to appointment and shall reside in the region while in office.

The Executive Director shall assist the Chairperson in carrying out EVDA's functions and shall serve as Secretary to the Board.

SECTION 14. Advisory Council. — There is hereby constituted an EVDA Advisory Council composed of: (a) the EVDA Chairperson, as Head; (b) the RDC Chairperson; (c) the District Representatives of Eastern Visayas; (d) the Provincial Governors of Eastern Visayas; (e) the City Mayors of Tacloban and Ormoc; and (f) the Regional Directors of NGAs with regional offices in Eastern Visayas. The Advisory Council shall meet at least once every six (6) months, or as often as necessary upon call of the EVDA Chairperson, to advise or be consulted on significant regional matters. Members of the Advisory Council shall have no voting rights in the Board unless otherwise qualified under Section 8.

SECTION 15. Organization and Staffing. — Upon recommendation of the Chairperson, the Board shall approve EVDA's organizational structure and staffing pattern, consistent with the government's compensation and position classification system and civil service laws, rules, and regulations. The Chairperson may reorganize EVDA and create or abolish divisions or units as necessary, subject to budgetary authority and existing laws.

SECTION 16. Merit System. — All officials and employees shall be selected and appointed on the basis of merit and fitness in accordance with civil service laws, rules, and regulations. Personnel actions shall be governed by a merit system established by EVDA consistent with existing laws.

SEC. 17. Appropriations. — The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against current appropriations of concerned agencies for Eastern Visayas PAPs, as may be determined by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and thereafter included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SECTION 18. EVDA Fund; Donations; Use of Funds. — There is hereby created an EVDA Fund, consisting of: (a) GAA appropriations; (b) income from EVDA operations, fees, and charges as may be authorized by law; and (c) grants, donations, and endowments, whether foreign or domestic. All such funds shall be used exclusively to carry out the purposes of this Act and shall be subject to budgeting, accounting, and auditing laws, rules, and regulations. Acceptance and administration of ODA, grants, and donations shall comply with applicable laws, financing agreements, and government rules.

Any remaining balances of funds previously appropriated or donated to the National Government specifically for the rehabilitation of areas in Eastern Visayas affected by Typhoon Haiyan may, upon compliance with applicable laws, rules, and donor terms, be transferred to EVDA for administration and implementation of eligible purposes; Provided, That all such funds shall remain subject to Commission on Audit (COA) jurisdiction and to the terms of the underlying appropriations or agreements.

SECTION 19. Eastern Visayas Development Master Plan. — Upon organization, EVDA shall prepare the Eastern Visayas Development Master Plan and corresponding public investment program and submit the same to NEDA for integration into the PDP and the Public Investment Program. The Plan shall serve as the framework for accelerated, balanced, and climate-resilient development of Eastern Visayas and shall be updated at least every three (3) years.

SECTION 20. Administrative Supervision. — The Authority shall be under the policy supervision of the President. It shall coordinate closely with NEDA on planning, investment programming, and ODA matters.

SECTION 21. Interpretation; Respect for Mandates. — The powers and functions vested in EVDA shall be construed to decentralize and streamline development coordination and to promote effective collaboration among EVDA, NGAs, and LGUs. Nothing herein shall be construed to diminish or supplant the mandates, regulatory powers, or revenue-raising powers of NGAs and LGUs, or to confer on EVDA any taxing power or incentive-granting authority unless expressly provided by law.

SECTION 22. Governance Coverage; Procurement; Audit. — EVDA shall be covered by applicable governance, compensation, and corporate standards for entities with original charters, subject to the Governance Commission for GOCCs (GCG) and other oversight agencies as may be provided by law. All procurement shall be in accordance with applicable procurement laws and rules, including those governing ODA and international agreements. All EVDA funds and properties shall be subject to COA audit. Disbursements shall be for public purposes only.

SECTION 23. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). — Within ninety (90) days from effectivity, EVDA, in consultation with NEDA, DBM, COA, the Civil Service Commission (CSC), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the PPP Center, PEZA, and key stakeholders, shall promulgate the IRR to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 24. Periodic Review. — EVDA shall conduct a comprehensive review of its performance, mandates, and organizational structure every five (5) years from effectivity and submit its recommendations to the President and to Congress.

SECTION 25. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 26. Repealing Clause. — All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 27. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,