



Global Immigration alert

June 2024

Philippines

Amended processes for PEZA Visa downgrading, motions for reconsideration and Temporary Visitor Visa extensions

Executive summary

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) in the Philippines announced significant changes to its procedures and policies governing Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) visas, motions for reconsideration of visa applications and Temporary Visitor Visa (TVV) extensions.

Key developments

- ▶ *Downgrading of PEZA Visas.* The BI PEZA office recently introduced a new email-based notification system for downgrading PEZA Visas. The BI PEZA Extension Office is now sending approvals for applications to downgrade PEZA Visas to applicants via email, which will serve as a formal notice to avoid delays when issuing downgraded visas. These emails will include details regarding the implementation of the downgrading, the Emigration Clearance Certificate (ECC-A) and, if applicable, the order to leave.
- ▶ *New Visa Processing Center (VPC).* Earlier this year, the BI introduced a new entity called the VPC to process visa applications. The VPC has the authority to accept, process, assess and evaluate applications for new visas, visa conversions and visa extensions, among other services (these services were previously handled by the Visa and Special Permits Task Force (VSPTF) and the Central Receiving Unit (CRU)). Under the VPC's authority, visa applications are not subject to pre-evaluation upon filing and are being accepted on an "as is" basis.
- ▶ *Suspension of motions for reconsideration of rejected applications.* Earlier this year, the BI Main and Satellite offices suspended the filing of motions for reconsideration of

rejected visa applications. To avoid rejections, applicants and companies must ensure that all documents submitted with visa applications are genuine, in order and complete. This suspension will remain in place until the BI issues new guidelines or provides further updates.

- ▶ *Online extension of TVVs.* In line with the launch of a new [eServices](#) platform in 2023, the BI recently introduced new guidelines for applications for extending TVVs filed through the Online Application and Payment System (OAPS). This facility is now available to foreign nationals admitted under Section 9(a) of the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940 or Executive Order No. 408, with the exception of certain groups who must still apply in person as advised under the Immigration Operations Circular No. 2024-001.

Impact on employers

Employers can benefit from streamlined communications and efficient processing with the new email-based PEZA Visa downgrading approval process and the online TVV extension application system. To avoid rejections of immigration applications, companies may exercise diligence in submitting necessary documents. Individuals who do not qualify for the online TVV extension application submission process may apply for extensions before the expiry of their authorized stay to maintain legal status in the Philippines.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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