




SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )

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RECORDED BY: 

SENATE  
S.B. No. 1183

Introduced by: Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" A. Aquino IV

AN ACT  
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE BALIK SCIENTIST PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS  
THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Filipino scientists have been contributing to groundbreaking advancement in scientific research all over the world with their talent, intelligence, and creativity. Yet as a country, we are lagging behind our neighbors in scientific output.

As a nation, we produce fewer research papers and file far fewer patents, with 1.8 per million population in 2010, while Thailand had 17.6, Malaysia 43.4, and Vietnam 3.5, owing to the underdeveloped state of research and development in the country. Although numerous Filipino scientists would like to serve their country and contribute to our technological, social, and economic advancement, many opt to move overseas where their work is highly valued, and where there are more opportunities to conduct meaningful research.

The Balik Scientist Program which was reinstated in 1993, is currently based upon an Executive Order No. 130 and has successfully encouraged some of our scientists to return and contribute to research that will address development gaps in the Philippines.

The Balik Scientist Program provides financial incentives for overseas Filipino scientists and facilitates their return to work on either a short-term or long-term basis. The program subsidizes the cost of returning to the Philippines to impart their technical expertise to the nation, while conducting research to address our country's needs.

Institutionalizing this will provide financial benefits to returning overseas scientists, but more importantly, it will signify our government's commitment to, and recognition of science, research and development.

Once passed into law, Filipino scientists can be assured that their work is valued and that the government is their partner in promoting, and protecting research and development.

It is not just Filipino scientists that stand to gain from this program, but the Filipino people, as the brightest minds pour their brain power to solving longstanding problems like poverty through science and technology.

In view of the foregoing, the passing of this bill is earnestly sought.

**Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" A. Aquino IV**

*Bam Aquino*



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

- 1           **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*Balik Scientist Act.*”
- 2           **SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The State recognizes that the utilization of the  
3 expertise of expatriate Filipino scientists and technologists is a vital component of the  
4 nation's political, economic and social development efforts, hence, it is hereby declared the  
5 policy of the State to encourage Filipino scientists and technology experts from abroad to  
6 return to the Philippines and share their expertise to accelerate the development of the  
7 country.
- 8           Towards this end, any foreign-based scientist, professional, technician, or any person  
9 with special skills or expertise who is of Filipino descent shall be allowed to share his or her  
10 profession or expertise in the Philippines in accordance with the implementing rules and  
11 regulations which shall be promulgated by the Department of Science and Technology  
12 (DOST) in consultation with relevant agencies of the government and non-government  
13 organizations.
- 14           **SECTION 3. General Objectives.** – This Act aims to strengthen the scientific and  
15 technological human resources of the academe, public institutions and domestic  
16 corporations in order to promote knowledge sharing and accelerate the flow of new  
17 technologies into the country.
- 18           **SECTION 4. Definition of Balik Scientist.** – A Balik Scientist is a science technology  
19 expert or professional, as certified by the DOST, who is a Filipino citizen or a foreigner of  
20 Filipino descent, residing abroad, and contracted by the government to return and serve in  
21 the Philippines along his or her field of expertise for a Short Term Engagement with a  
22 duration of at least thirty (30) days per award to be served within one (1) year from the date  
23 of the award or Long Term Engagement with a duration of at least twenty-four to thirty-six

1 (24-36) months subject to renewal to be determined by DOST and to be served within five  
2 (5) years from the date of the award.

3 **SECTION 5. Incentives.** – Incentives under the Balik Scientist Program shall include  
4 the following and such other privileges as may be provided in the implementing rules and  
5 regulations:

6 A. Short Term Program:

- 7 1. One (1) free round-trip airfare originating from a foreign country to the  
8 Philippines;
- 9 2. Tax exempt daily allowance to be determined by the DOST;
- 10 3. Participation in Grants-in-Aid (GIA) research and development projects of the  
11 DOST subject to guidelines to be provided in the implementing rules and  
12 regulations;
- 13 4. All Balik Scientists, as certified by the DOST, shall be exempt from the  
14 licensing or permit requirement of the Professional Regulation Commission  
15 (PRC): *Provided*, That the DOST shall submit to the PRC the list of Balik  
16 Scientists whom it has certified prior to the award: *Provided, further*, That  
17 accomplishment reports of the Balik Scientists shall likewise be furnished by  
18 the DOST to the PRC at the end of each award;
- 19 5. Reimbursement of expenses for excess baggage allowance related to  
20 scientific project or activities;
- 21 6. Donation of instruments and materials related to the scientific program or  
22 activities shall be exempted from taxes and duties. Freight and storage  
23 expenses shall be borne by the host institution; and
- 24 7. Subject to the applicable provisions of Section 29 of Commonwealth Act No.  
25 613, the Balik Scientist of foreign citizenship, as certified by the DOST, shall  
26 be granted by the Secretary of Justice special non-immigrant visas under  
27 Section 47 (a) (2) of the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940, as amended,  
28 after compliance with the requirements therefor. Said Balik Scientist shall be  
29 exempted from the payment of visa, immigration and registration fees in  
30 accordance with Section 251 of the Philippine Foreign Service Code of 1983,  
31 as amended by Section 831 of Department Order No. 19a-95, series of 1995,  
32 otherwise known as the Regulations of the Department of Foreign Affairs, if  
33 applicable.

34 B. Long Term Program:

- 35 1. One (1) free one-way airfare from a foreign country to the Philippines,  
36 including airfare for the spouse and two (2) minor dependents, and one (1)  
37 free return trip airfare after completion of the award;
- 38 2. Reimbursement of expenses for excess baggage allowance related to  
39 scientific project or activities;
- 40 3. Relocation allowance to be determined by DOST;
- 41 4. Tax exempt monthly allowance to be given by the DOST;
- 42 5. Housing may be arranged by pre-determined host institutions;
- 43 6. As determined by DOST, duty and tax-free importation of personal effect and  
44 professional instruments and material in quantities and of class suitable to

1 the profession, rank or position of the Balik Scientists importing them for  
2 their own use and not for barter or sale in accordance with Section 105 of the  
3 Tariff Code. Duty and tax free importation of one (1) unit second hand motor  
4 vehicle with gross vehicle weight (GVW) not exceeding 3000 kilograms  
5 subject to the classification standard of motor vehicle transported set forth  
6 by the Bureau of Customs: *Provided*, That the grantee under the short term  
7 program shall likewise be entitled to this benefit who shall decide to avail of  
8 the Long Term Award: *Provided, further*, That the grantee shall abide by the  
9 rules and regulations under the no-dollar import (NDI) program of the DTI-  
10 Bureau of Import Service. A certificate of endorsement from the DOST shall  
11 be submitted in lieu of the required personal appearance: *Provided, finally*,  
12 That the grantee shall be exempted from posting bond and exportation of the  
13 motor vehicle to the country of origin upon expiration of the award;

- 14 7. Donations of equipment, instruments and materials related to the scientific  
15 program or activities shall be exempted from the taxes and duties: *Provided*,  
16 That the donation shall be on the account of DOST. Likewise, freight and  
17 storage expenses shall be borne by the host institution;
- 18 8. Reimbursement of expenses for the surface shipment of personal household  
19 effects and professional instruments, including one (1) motor vehicle the  
20 total weight of which does not exceed 3 ½ tons volume weight;
- 21 9. Exemption from payment of travel tax of Balik Scientist including his or her  
22 immediate family members as certified by the DOST;
- 23 10. Exemption from submission of Immigration clearance certificate and  
24 payment of multiple entry fees;
- 25 11. Exemption from securing alien employment permit within the duration of  
26 their contract pursuant to Section 2 of Department Order No. 97-09, Series of  
27 2009, as amended by Department Order No. 120-12, Series of 2012, of the  
28 Department of Labor and Employment;
- 29 12. All Balik Scientists, as certified by the DOST, shall be exempt from the  
30 licensing or permit requirement of the PRC: *Provided*, That the DOST shall  
31 submit to the PRC the list of Balik Scientists shall likewise be furnished by the  
32 DOST to the PRC at the end of each award or Project;
- 33 13. Participation in Grants-in Aid for research and development projects  
34 approved by the Secretary of DOST;
- 35 14. Availability of the infrastructure budget for the laboratory to come up with an  
36 innovation: *Provided*, That the laboratory shall remain as property of the  
37 government after the expiration of the term; and
- 38 15. Subject to applicable provisions of Section 29 Commonwealth Act 613, Balik  
39 Scientists of foreign citizenship, including his/her immediate family members,  
40 as certified by the DOST, shall be granted by the Secretary of Justice special  
41 non-immigrant visas under Section 47 (a) (2) of the Philippine Immigration  
42 Act of 1940, as amended, after compliance with the requirements therefor.  
43 Said Balik Scientist and immediate family members and registration fees in  
44 accordance with Section 251 of the Philippine Foreign Service Code of 1983,  
45 as amended by Section 831 of Department Order No. 19A-95, Series of 1995,  
46 otherwise known as the Regulations of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

1 Balik Scientists under the Short Term and the Long Term Awards shall be provided  
2 with reasonable accident and medical insurance for the duration of the award as  
3 determined by DOST.

4 **SECTION 6. Administration.** – This program shall be administered by the DOST which  
5 shall issue the implementing rules and regulations in consultation with appropriate agencies  
6 ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act.

7 **SECTION 7. Funding.** – The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act  
8 shall be included in the annual budget of the DOST in accordance with the Annual General  
9 Appropriations Act.

10 **SECTION 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90) days from the  
11 effectivity of this Act, DOST, in consultation with concerned agencies and other relevant  
12 stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective  
13 implementation of this Act.

14 **SECTION 9. Separability Clause.** – Should any provision herein be declared  
15 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions of this Act.

16 **SECTION 10. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or  
17 other issuances or parts inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or  
18 modified accordingly.

19 **SECTION 11. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication  
20 in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

21 *Approved,*