



SENATE

S. No. 1533

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PREPARED JOINTLY BY THE COMMITTEES ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; WAYS AND MEANS; AND FINANCE WITH SENATORS AQUINO IV, POE, EJERCITO, PIMENTEL III, ZUBIRI, VILLANUEVA, GORDON, GATCHALIAN AND VILLAR AS AUTHORS THEREOF

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

*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  
2 the “*Balik Scientist Act*”.

3           SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes  
4 that the utilization of the expertise of expatriate Filipino  
5 scientists and technologists is a vital component of the  
6 nation’s political, economic and social development efforts.  
7 Hence, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to  
8 encourage Filipino scientists and technology experts from

1 abroad to return to the Philippines and share their  
2 expertise to accelerate the development of the country.

3 Towards this end, any foreign-based scientist,  
4 professional, technician, or any person with special skills  
5 or expertise, who is of Filipino descent, shall be allowed to  
6 share his or her profession or expertise in the Philippines  
7 in accordance with the implementing rules and regulations  
8 which shall be promulgated by the Department of Science  
9 and Technology (DOST) in consultation with relevant  
10 agencies of the government and nongovernment  
11 organizations.

12 SEC. 3. *General Objectives.* – This Act aims to  
13 strengthen the scientific and technological human  
14 resources of the academe, public institutions and domestic  
15 corporations in order to promote knowledge sharing and  
16 accelerate the flow of new technologies into the country.

17 Towards this end, DOST shall award short, medium,  
18 and long term engagements to Balik Scientists, and ensure  
19 their participation in the mentorship activities, training,  
20 lecture, and other similar activities in any institution,

1 subject to the agreement between the Balik Scientist, the  
2 host institution, as approved by the DOST.

3 SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the  
4 following terms shall mean:

5 (a) *Balik Scientist* – a science and technology expert  
6 or professional, as certified by the DOST, who is currently  
7 or who was formerly a Filipino citizen or a foreigner of  
8 Filipino descent, residing abroad, and contracted by the  
9 government to return and serve in the Philippines along  
10 his or her field of expertise under short, medium or long  
11 term engagement;

12 (b) *Balik Scientist Program* – the Program institutionalized  
13 under this Act;

14 (c) *Short-Term Engagement* – the term of engagement  
15 under the Program with a minimum duration of fifteen  
16 (15) days to maximum duration of six (6) months per  
17 award to be served within one (1) year from the date of the  
18 award;

19 (d) *Medium-Term Engagement* – the term of engagement  
20 under the Program with a duration of more than six (6)

1 months but not to exceed one (1) year per award to be  
2 served within two (2) to three (3) years from the date of the  
3 award; and

4 (e) *Long-Term Engagement* – the term of engagement  
5 under the Program with duration of more than one (1) year  
6 to three (3) years, subject to renewal to be determined by  
7 DOST and to be served within five (5) years from the date  
8 of the award.

9 SEC. 5. *General Benefits, Incentives and Privileges.* –

10 All Balik Scientists under short, medium, or long term  
11 engagement, shall be eligible for the following general  
12 benefits, incentives, and privileges:

13 (a) Exemption from the licensing or permitting  
14 requirements of the Professional Regulation Commission  
15 (PRC): *Provided*, That the DOST shall submit to the PRC  
16 the list of Balik Scientists with the corresponding duration  
17 of awarded engagement;

18 (b) Accident and medical insurance covering the  
19 duration of the engagement awarded by the DOST;

1 (c) Reimbursement of expenses for excess baggage  
2 allowance related to scientific project or activities;

3 (d) Exemption from renouncing their oath of  
4 allegiance to the country where they took the oath, unless  
5 the Balik Scientist after the service decides to repatriate  
6 and retain the government position, as applicable;

7 (e) Tax and duty exemption in the donation of  
8 equipment, instruments, and materials to DOST: *Provided,*  
9 That DOST shall bear the freight and storage expenses  
10 related to the importation and transportation of the  
11 donated equipment, instruments, and materials; and

12 (f) Tax and duty exemption in the importation of  
13 professional equipment, instruments, and materials of the  
14 Balik Scientists.

15 SEC. 6. *Term-Specific Benefits, Incentives, and*  
16 *Privileges.* – Balik Scientists shall be eligible to benefits,  
17 incentives, and privileges under the following terms of the  
18 engagement:

19 (a) Short Term Program:

1           (1) One (1) free round-trip business class airfare  
2 originating from a foreign country to the Philippines,  
3 exempt from Philippine Travel Tax;

4           (2) When applicable, DOST-subsidized and -facilitated  
5 application for a visa whose validity shall cover the  
6 duration of the awarded engagement;

7           (3) Tax exempt daily allowance in accordance with  
8 the prevailing rates prescribed by the United Nations  
9 Development Programme (UNDP) as determined by the  
10 DOST; and

11           (4) Participation in Grants-in-Aid (GIA) research and  
12 development projects of the DOST subject to guidelines to  
13 be provided in the implementing rules and regulations. A  
14 lump sum research subsidy of Five hundred thousand  
15 pesos (P500,000.00) shall be granted to the Balik Scientist  
16 in accordance with relevant government regulations and  
17 the need of the program involved.

18           (b) Medium Term Program:

1           (1) One (1) free round-trip business class airfare  
2     originating from a foreign country to the Philippines,  
3     exempt from Philippine Travel Tax;

4           (2) When applicable, DOST-subsidized and -facilitated  
5     application for a visa whose validity shall cover the  
6     duration of the awarded engagement;

7           (3) Tax exempt daily allowance in accordance with  
8     the prevailing rates prescribed by the UNDP as  
9     determined by the DOST;

10          (4) Participation in GIA research and development  
11     projects of the DOST subject to guidelines to be provided in  
12     the implementing rules and regulations. An initial lump  
13     sum research subsidy of at least Five hundred thousand  
14     pesos (P500,000.00), and at most Two million pesos  
15     (P2,000,000.00) shall be granted to the Balik Scientist in  
16     accordance with relevant government regulations and the  
17     need of the Program involved; and

18          (5) Monthly housing or accommodation allowance.

19          (c) Long Term Program:

1           (1) One (1) free round-trip business class airfare  
2 originating from a foreign country to the Philippines,  
3 exempt from the Philippine Travel Tax, for the awardees,  
4 their spouses, and minor dependents;

5           (2) Special Relocation Benefits:

6           (a) Special non-immigrant visa, for awardees, their  
7 spouses, and minor children: *Provided*, That the validity of  
8 the visa shall cover the duration of the awarded long-term  
9 engagement;

10          (b) Exemption from the requirement to secure an  
11 alien employment permit from the Department of Labor  
12 and Employment (DOLE) for Balik Scientists and their  
13 spouses;

14          (c) Exemption from submission of immigration  
15 clearance certificate and payment of multiple entry fees;

16          (d) Tax and duty exemption in the importation of  
17 personal and household effects, professional equipment,  
18 instruments, and materials of the Balik Scientist;

19          (e) Tax and duty exemption in the importation of one  
20 (1) motor vehicle whose gross vehicle weight (GVW) does



1 not exceed 3.5 tons, and subject to the motor vehicle  
2 classification standard set forth by the Bureau of Customs:  
3 *Provided*, That the Balik Scientist, assisted by the DOST,  
4 shall ensure compliance with other applicable rules and  
5 regulations in the importation of motor vehicles: *Provided*,  
6 *further*, That an endorsement from the DOST shall suffice  
7 as substitute to the required personal appearance:  
8 *Provided, finally*, That the Balik Scientist shall be exempt  
9 from posting bond and exportation of the motor vehicle to  
10 the country of origin upon the expiration of the award;

11 (f) Admission assistance to the preferred schools for  
12 the minor children of Balik Scientists;

13 (g) Assistance in securing job opportunities for the  
14 spouse of the Balik Scientist;

15 (h) Relocation allowance to be determined by DOST;  
16 and

17 (i) Monthly housing or accommodation allowance;

18 (3) Participation in Grants-in-Aid for research and  
19 development projects approved by the Secretary of DOST.

20 A lump sum research subsidy of Two million pesos

1 (P2,000,000.00) shall be granted to the Balik Scientist in  
2 accordance with relevant government rules and  
3 regulations and the need of the program involved; and

4 (4) Funding for the establishment and development of  
5 a facility or laboratory: *Provided*, That the facility or  
6 laboratory shall be deemed government property.

7 SEC. 7. *Role in the Research and Development (R&D)*  
8 *Leadership Program of DOST.* – Awardees are entitled to  
9 assume some mentorship, leadership, professional or  
10 technical positions in the R&D Leadership Program under  
11 the Science for Change Program (S4CP) of DOST.

12 SEC. 8. *Administration.* – This Program shall be  
13 administered by the DOST which shall issue the  
14 implementing rules and regulations in consultation with  
15 appropriate agencies ninety (90) days after the approval of  
16 this Act.

17 SEC. 9. *Funding.* – The funds necessary to carry out  
18 the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual  
19 budget of the DOST in accordance with the Annual  
20 General Appropriations Act.

1           SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* –  
2    Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act,  
3    DOST, in consultation with concerned agencies and other  
4    relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary  
5    rules and regulations for the effective implementation of  
6    this Act.

7           SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision  
8    herein be declared unconstitutional, the same shall not  
9    affect the validity of the other provisions of this Act.

10          SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders,  
11    rules, and regulations or other issuances or parts  
12    inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby  
13    repealed or modified accordingly.

14          SEC. 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen  
15    (15) days after publication in the *Official Gazette* or in any  
16    two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the  
17    Philippines.

          Approved,