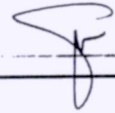


SENATE
S. No. 583

'19 JUL 17 P5:52

Introduced by Senator Grace Poe

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AN ACT
ACCELERATING THE TRANSFER OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS, E-COMMERCE, AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO
THE COUNTRYSIDE BY ESTABLISHING ICT CENTERS FOR EXCELLENCE IN
ALL REGIONS OF THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Explanatory Note

Way back in 1960, the visionary communications theorist Marshall McLuhan argued that "electric media" would radically change our lives. It would change our relationship with print media, extend our senses, and most importantly convert the world into a global village. Geographical, cultural, and economic divides would be conquered by new technology.

Mr. McLuhan made these predictions when such technology was only at a rudimentary stage. Only now are we grasping the power of his words. True enough, what we now know as Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has become an inseparable part of our lives, connecting communities, businesses and families.

One developing field in the study and application of ICT is its utilization for poverty reduction. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB)¹, ICT is "...the missing link" in poverty reduction efforts in Asia:

"There are parts of our world where nothing reaches people: there may not be physical connectivity to communities due to the absence of roads, for example. In other cases, the distances could be cultural, gender-related, or due to a lack of access to services. ICT can help bridge those gaps and close distances."²

The ADB gives several examples of how ICT has been used in poverty reduction efforts. In Samoa, ICT helped provide access to quality education through computer training and the Internet. In the Greater Mekong Subregion, ICT-based

¹ <https://www.adb.org/features/missing-link-development-focus-ict>

² *ibid.*

learning materials, radio, and GIS mapping technology were used to reach remote ethnic communities where the incidence of HIV infection was high. ICT has also helped Asian farmers get access to rice knowledge banks.

We should also start to use ICT as a tool for poverty reduction. The first step is to hasten awareness and adoption of ICT as a tool for governance. On the national level, Republic Act No. 10844, or the "*Department of Information and Communications Technology Act of 2015*" is a major component. The next step- which this measure proposes- is to increase the role of ICT in local governance.

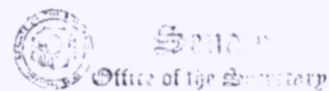
Under this measure, there shall be established regional centers of excellence, hereafter referred to as "Centers" for ICT in all provinces of the Philippines. These centers shall be under the direct supervision of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT). These centers shall perform the following powers and functions:

- (a) Identify the needs and opportunities in science and technology in the provinces;
- (b) Assist in the formulation of national and regional ICT policies, programs and projects plans in collaboration with local ICT councils and other stakeholders;
- (c) Implement DICT programs/projects on the delivery of science and technology services such as technology demonstration and transfer, science and technology promotion and information dissemination, and such other areas of concern that will benefit the people in the provinces;
and
- (d) Develop institutional linkages with provincial offices of other departments, local government units, academe and nongovernmental offices for the effective implementation of science and technology programs in the provinces.

This bill also proposes for the recognition of "smart" cities or municipalities through a "Smart City or Municipality" awards wherein outstanding Cities and Municipalities who actively utilize ICT in improving the lives of their constituents will be recognized as a "Smart City or Municipality" by the DICT.

Speedy approval of this measure is eagerly sought.


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ALL REGIONS OF THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "*Information and*
2 *Communications Technology Transfer Acceleration Act of 2019*"

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes the vital role of
4 information and communications technology (ICT) in nation-building and shall
5 ensure the emergence of ICT structures suitable to the needs and aspirations of the
6 nation. It is thus declared the policy of the State to accelerate the transfer of
7 modern ICT and its benefits to the rest of the country, particularly to the rural areas,
8 so that it may be employed for the purposes of higher productivity, increased
9 earning power, and an improved quality of life.

10 Sec. 3. *Establishment of Provincial ICT Centers.* – There shall be established,
11 under the direct supervision of the Department of Information and Communications
12 Technology (DICT), regional centers of ICT excellence, hereafter referred to as
13 "Centers" in all provinces of the Philippines. Whenever practicable, such centers shall
14 be established in state colleges or universities specializing in ICT-related courses or
15 in LGUs which are known to actively use ICT in governance.

16 Sec. 4. *Powers and Functions.* – The centers shall be extensions of the DICT.
17 They shall perform the following powers and functions:

- 1 (a) Identify the needs and opportunities in science and technology in the
2 provinces;
- 3 (b) Assist in the formulation of national and regional ICT policies, programs
4 and projects plans in collaboration with local ICT councils and other
5 stakeholders;
- 6 (c) Implement DICT programs/projects on the delivery of science and
7 technology services such as technology demonstration and transfer,
8 science and technology promotion and information dissemination, and
9 such other areas of concern that will benefit the people in the provinces;
10 *and*
- 11 (d) Develop institutional linkages with provincial offices of other departments,
12 local government units, academe and nongovernmental offices for the
13 effective implementation of science and technology programs in the
14 provinces.

15 *Sec. 5. Linkages with SUCs.* – The Secretary of the DICT is hereby authorized
16 to enter into agreements with the heads of the colleges or universities or the Chief
17 Executives of LGUs designated as centers, which may include matters of reporting
18 and payment of honoraria to members of their faculty and staff.

19 *Sec. 6. Recognition of Smart Cities and Municipalities.* – There shall be
20 established a “Smart City or Municipality” awards wherein outstanding Cities and
21 Municipalities who actively utilize ICT in improving the lives of their constituents will
22 be recognized as a “Smart City or Municipality” by the DICT. The Centers shall
23 identify and nominate the LGUs who shall be awarded by DICT based on criteria to
24 be issued through rules and regulations.

25 *Sec. 7. Appropriations.* – The amount needed for the operation and
26 maintenance of the Authority shall be included in the budget of the DICT under the
27 annual General Appropriations Act.

28 *Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DICT, in coordination with
29 other government agencies concerned, shall issue rules and regulations to effectively
30 implement the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days from this Act’s
31 effectivity.

1 *Sec. 9. Repealing Clause.* – All decrees, laws, executive orders, proclamations
2 and administrative regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of
3 this Act are likewise repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

4 *Sec. 10. Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is declared
5 unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full
6 force and effect.

7 *Sec. 11. Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
8 its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general
9 circulation.

Approved,