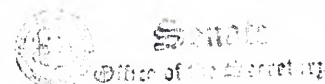


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



'22 JUL 25 P 2:25

SENATE
S. No. 873

RECEIVED

Introduced by Senator Grace Poe

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

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.

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

According to ADB, in Samoa, a Polynesian island country, ICT helped provide access to quality education through computer training and the Internet. In the

¹ Asian Development Bank. (28 February 2013). *Information and Communication Technology for Poverty Reduction in Asia*. <https://www.adb.org/features/missing-link-development-focus-ict>

² *Ibid.*

Greater Mekong Subregion (Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam), ICT-based learning materials, radio, and geographic information system (GIS) mapping techniques were used to reach remote ethnic communities where there is a high incidence of HIV infection. ICT has also helped Asian farmers get access to rice knowledge banks.

A 2020 World Bank report entitled "A Better Normal under Covid-19: Digitalizing the Philippine Economy Now" suggests that the rapid adoption of digital technologies can help the country overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially among the poor. However, the report notes that digital adoption in the Philippines is trailing behind its regional neighbors, and the digital divide is still prevalent. Internet connectivity is still limited in rural areas; if they are available, it is expensive, slow, and unreliable. World Bank stresses that digital adoption by the government will not only assist in post-COVID-19 recovery efforts but more so in achieving the country's vision of becoming a society free of poverty by 2040³

It is imperative that we start harnessing 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, 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), and 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

³ Llorito, D. (05 October 2020). *Harnessing Digital Technologies Can Help Philippines Overcome Impact of Pandemic, Hasten Recovery*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/10/05/harnessing-digital-technologies-can-help-philippines-overcome-impact-of-pandemic-hasten-recovery>

effective implementation of science and technology programs in the provinces.

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

In view of the above arguments, the immediate approval of this measure is eagerly sought.


GRACE POE
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AN ACT
ACCELERATING THE TRANSFER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) TO THE COUNTRYSIDE BY ESTABLISHING ICT CENTERS FOR EXCELLENCE IN 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 2022*"

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – In recognition of the vital role of Information
4 and Communications Technology (ICT) in nation-building, the State shall ensure the
5 emergence of ICT structures suitable to the needs and aspirations of the nation.
6 Thus, it is the declared the policy of the State to accelerate the transfer of modern
7 ICT and its benefits to the rest of the country, especially to the unserved and
8 underserved areas, so that it may be employed for the purposes of higher
9 productivity, increased 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, herein 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 local government units (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 organizations for
13 the effective implementation of science and technology programs in the
14 provinces.

15 *Sec. 5. Linkages with State Universities and Colleges (SUCs).* – The Secretary
16 of the DICT is hereby authorized to enter into agreements with the heads of State
17 Universities and Colleges or the chief executives of LGUs designated as centers, with
18 regard to reporting 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 award” 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 identify
23 and nominate the LGUs who shall be awarded by DICT based on criteria to be issued
24 by the Department through the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

25 *Sec. 7. Appropriations.* – The amount needed for the operation and
26 maintenance of the Centers 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 its 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,