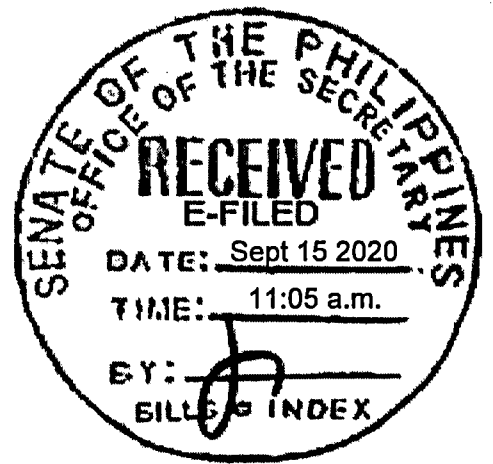


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



SENATE
S. NO. 1834

Prepared by the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; Science and Technology; and Finance with Senators Angara and Villanueva as authors thereof.

AN ACT
TO ENHANCE THE PHILIPPINE DIGITAL WORKFORCE COMPETITIVENESS,
ESTABLISHING FOR THE PURPOSE AN INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL FOR
DEVELOPMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS OF PHILIPPINE DIGITAL
WORKFORCE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

ARTICLE I

STATE POLICIES AND BASIC PRINCIPLES

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2
3 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Philippine Digital
4 Workforce Competitiveness Act."

5 SEC. 2. *Declaration of State Policy.* – The State, recognizing the transformation
6 in the world of work due to rapid acceleration of digitalization and advances in
7 technologies such as artificial intelligence and automation across range of industries
8 and sectors, shall enhance the skills and competitiveness of the Philippine workforce
9 in human, and digital technology and innovations. In furtherance thereof, the State
10 shall ensure that all Filipino workers have access to and provided with digital skills and
11 competencies that are at par with global standards and shall encourage digital
12 innovations and entrepreneurship. To this end, the State shall provide the necessary
13 infrastructure, and in collaboration with the private stakeholders, shall undertake the
14 upskilling, re-skilling and training of the Filipino workforce on digital technology and
15 innovations for employability and competitiveness in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

1 **ARTICLE II**

2 **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

3 SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – The following terms as used in this Act shall
4 mean:

5 a) *21st century skills* - refer to skills that are required by new jobs, including
6 but not limited to critical thinking, problem solving, good communication,
7 collaboration, information and technology literacy, flexibility and adaptability,
8 innovativeness, and creativity, among others;

9 b) *Certifications* - refer to any attestation of an individual's knowledge,
10 proficiency, or competence in a certain subject matter or skillset by a reputable
11 third party, which can be public, private or non-profit in nature;

12 c) *Co-working or shared service facilities* - refer to shared workspaces
13 equipped with the necessary facilities and support services for the needs of the
14 digital workforce;

15 d) *Digital workforce* - refers to any natural person who engages in
16 remunerated activity through the use of digital skills and digital technology,
17 regardless of work or employment arrangement, whether as a regular employee
18 of a company or as a freelancer;

19 e) *Digital labor platforms* - refer to digital technology-based platforms that
20 facilitate the production, trade, and commercial exchange of digital content,
21 digital products, or other goods and services arising from digital transactions.
22 This includes web-based and online platforms where work is outsourced through
23 an open call to geographically-dispersed individuals and location-based online
24 applications where work is allocated to individuals in a specific geographical area;

25 f) *Digital content* - refers to any type of content that exists in the form of
26 digital data that are stored, and can be created, viewed, processed, distributed,
27 modified and stored using computers and digital technologies. The content can
28 be either free or paid content such as web-pages and websites, social media,
29 data and databases, digital audio, such as mp3s or mp4s, and e-books, digital
30 imagery, digital video, video games, computer programs and software;

1 g) *Digital entrepreneurship* - refers to the creation of new ventures or the
2 transformation of existing businesses by developing novel digital technologies
3 and/or novel usage of such technologies;

4 h) *Digital inclusion* - refers to the process of ensuring that all members of
5 society, especially those from disadvantaged and marginalized groups have
6 access and are empowered to utilize and benefit from state-of-the-art
7 Information and Communications Technology (ICT);

8 i) *Digital skills* - refer to a range of skills, encompassing a combination of
9 behaviors, expertise, know-how, work habits, character traits, dispositions, and
10 critical understanding on the use of digital devices, communication applications,
11 and networks to access and manage information;

12 j) *Digital technology* - refers to any product or service that can be used to
13 create, view, distribute, modify, store, retrieve, transmit, and receive information
14 electronically in a digital form such as personal computers and devices like
15 desktop, laptop, netbook, tablet computer, smart phones, games consoles,
16 media players, e-book readers, as well as digital television, robots, personal
17 assistant smart devices, and smart boards;

18 k) *Innovation* - refers to the creation of new ideas using new or existing
19 technologies that results in the development of new or improved products,
20 processes, or services, which are then spread or transferred across the market.

21 **ARTICLE III**

22 **DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

23 SEC. 4. *Development of the Digital Workforce*. – In developing and ensuring
24 the competitiveness of Philippine digital workforce, the State shall:

- 25 a) Ensure and take pro-active measures to improve the digital competence of all
26 citizens of working age and equip them with digital skills, including digital
27 entrepreneurship and remote work using digital skills in order to gain from the
28 benefits of the growing number of jobs and opportunities that are enabled by
29 digital technologies;
- 30 b) Ensure that Filipinos are equipped with digital skills and 21st century skills;

- 1 c) Ensure adequate protection and support for the digital workforce for the
2 continuous improvement of their skills to effectively keep up with global
3 standards;
- 4 d) Provide support to the digital workforce through the provision of co-working or
5 shared service facilities and loan facilities with concessional terms;
- 6 e) Ensure digital inclusion by taking into account special needs of sectors such as,
7 but not limited to, persons with disabilities (PWDs), indigenous peoples, senior
8 citizens, individuals located in geographically-isolated and disadvantaged areas,
9 and other sectors in designing programs, activities and projects pursuant to this
10 Act; and
- 11 f) Ensure that all stakeholders from the government, industry and labor sector are
12 properly consulted and in collaboration in the crafting of policies, programs,
13 activities and projects for the upskilling, re-skilling and training of the Filipino
14 workforce in digital technology and innovations.

15 **ARTICLE IV**

16 **INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS OF**
17 **PHILIPPINE DIGITAL WORKFORCE**

18 *SEC. 5. Inter-Agency Council for Development and Competitiveness of*
19 *Philippine Digital Workforce.* – There is hereby established an Inter-Agency Council
20 for Development and Competitiveness of Philippine Digital Workforce, hereinafter
21 referred to as the “Inter-Agency Council.” It shall be chaired by the National Economic
22 Development Authority (NEDA) and shall be composed of the following government
23 agencies as members: the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the
24 Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Information and
25 Communications Technology (DICT), the Department of Science and Technology
26 (DOST), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of
27 Education (DepED), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical
28 Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

1 The Inter-Agency Council shall be the primary planning, coordinating and
2 implementing body in the promotion, development, enhancement and
3 competitiveness of the Philippine digital workforce. It shall ensure that all Filipino
4 youth, students and workers have access to and are provided with skills and
5 competencies in digital contents, platforms and technology that are at par with global
6 standards, and shall encourage digital innovations and entrepreneurship. It shall
7 consult and collaborate with all stakeholders from the government, industry and labor
8 sector in the development and implementation of a national roadmap on upskilling,
9 re-skilling and training of the Filipino workforce to address the skills gaps particularly,
10 in digital technology and digital entrepreneurship.

11 **SEC. 6. Powers and Functions.** – The Inter-Agency Council shall have the
12 following powers and functions:

- 13 a) Serve as the primary body responsible for the promotion, development,
14 enhancement and competitiveness of Philippine digital workforce, and in
15 providing entrepreneurs with incubation programs as well as support in terms of
16 funding, skills development, and exposure to business networks;
- 17 b) With the DOLE as the lead agency, and in collaboration with the DICT, the local
18 government units (LGUs) and other stakeholders, conduct a digital technology
19 and digital skills mapping nationwide identifying the available skills and
20 competencies, skills gaps and training needs, demographics of the Philippine
21 workforce in digital technology and sectors, and the availability and access to
22 digital platforms and ICT infrastructure, among others;
- 23 c) Formulate digital technology and digital skills roadmap for evolving jobs and
24 skills, identifying job growth in specific professional areas, including but not
25 limited to the fastest-growing seven (7) professional areas identified by the
26 World Economic Forum, namely: care, engineering and cloud computing, sales
27 marketing and content, data and Artificial Intelligence (AI), green jobs, people
28 and culture, and specialized project managers;
- 29 d) With the DICT and DOST as lead agencies, and in collaboration with various
30 stakeholders, design and implement programs for upskilling, re-skilling and
31 training, taking into consideration the results of digital technology and digital
32 skills mapping and the roadmap for evolving jobs and skills;

- 1 e) Encourage and incentivize technological innovations for the growth of agri-
2 fishery industries and hospital care or public health services;
- 3 f) With the DTI as the lead agency, promote business or economic opportunities
4 for digitization of start-ups and MSMEs, and provide technical assistance and low
5 interest loans;
- 6 g) Provide support and innovative strategies to promote digital technology, digital
7 careers and innovations among students, youth and workers, including the
8 provisions of incentives such as:
- 9 i. Full or partial scholarships or subsidies for appropriate trainings and
10 certifications, whether local or abroad;
- 11 ii. Full or partial subsidy for the use of co-working or shared service facilities,
12 equipment, and/or services provided by government or private enterprises
13 or institutions;
- 14 iii. Credit assistance, at low interest rate, from government financial
15 institutions for acquisition of equipment necessary to carry out digital work,
16 including but not limited to computers, hardware and software programs;
- 17 iv. Afford priority access to DTI support and assistance, under its program for
18 start-ups and for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), to digital
19 entrepreneurs, tech start-ups or innovators; and
- 20 v. Such other incentives that may be issued for the promotion, development
21 and enhancement of digital technology and digital skills across industries
22 and business sectors.
- 23 h) Establish a centralized web portal for all related training, skills development,
24 certification, and scholarship programs to allow access by all workers who are
25 qualified and willing to undergo upskilling or to acquire new skills in digital
26 technology;
- 27 i) Create committees, working groups and regional inter-agency councils to carry
28 out its mandate and functions;
- 29 j) Establish an Inter-Agency Council Secretariat, which may be lodged with the
30 NEDA or at any designated member agency; and

- 1 k) Conduct consultations, assessment, planning and re-planning exercise with a
2 view to ensuring the development and availability of highly-skilled digital
3 workforce in the country.

4 **ARTICLE V**

5 **ROLE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUs)**

6 *SEC. 7. Role of LGUs.* – All local government units shall create local policies
7 supporting and promoting the growth and development of digital technology, digital
8 careers and innovations in their respective communities, which may include providing
9 incentives for technological innovations for agri-fishery industries and hospital care or
10 public health services.

11 *SEC. 8. Role of Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs).* – All Public
12 Employment Service Offices shall:

- 13 a) Develop and maintain a webpage where PESO-accredited employers may
14 register and publish their vacancies;
15 b) Create a digital application help desk where job seekers can ask for feedback or
16 assistance with a job application;
17 c) Encourage and facilitate local access to jobs at crowdwork, crowdsource, or work
18 in-demand applications;
19 d) Create a localized digital technology and digital skills registry and encourage
20 listing in the locality for assistance and availment of local incentives; and
21 e) Conduct virtual job fairs.

22 *SEC. 9. E-Readiness of LGUs.* – The DICT, Department of Budget Management
23 (DBM), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and other relevant
24 government agencies shall ensure universal access to high-speed, quality, and
25 affordable Internet by prioritizing and facilitating the development of ICT
26 infrastructures in the localities across the country. The DILG and DICT shall jointly
27 assess the e-readiness of all municipalities, cities, provinces, and regions to ensure a
28 thriving digital workforce ecosystem.

29 For this purpose, the National Government shall prioritize the construction of
30 digital infrastructures to foster digital-based economic activity under their
31 infrastructure programs or initiatives.

1 **ARTICLE VI**

2 **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN TRAINING**
3 **AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

4 SEC. 10. *Public-Private Partnership in Trainings and Skills Development.* – The
5 Inter-Agency Council is hereby authorized to enter into public-private partnerships
6 with experts, information technology-business process outsourcing (IT-BPO) industry
7 associations, private companies and other stakeholders in the formulation and
8 implementation of training, skills development, and certification programs, covering
9 areas, including but not limited to:

- 10 a) Web development and designing;
11 b) Online teaching and tutoring;
12 c) Animation;
13 d) Content creation (writing and copywriting and others);
14 e) Digital marketing (e-commerce, sales and marketing);
15 f) Creative design, graphic designing, 3D modelling and CAD, game development,
16 logo design and illustration, and audio and video production;
17 g) Mobile application development;
18 h) Search engine optimization;
19 i) Virtual assistance (administrative support or assistance);
20 j) Branding and public relations, social media coordinator and community
21 management;
22 k) Web research, business intelligence and data analytics;
23 l) Transcription and data entry jobs article and blog writing;
24 m) Customer service and technical support;
25 n) Human resource management and systems;
26 o) Architecture services and other professional services through the Internet;
27 p) Management of teams of remote workers, and other competencies needed by
28 companies and individuals pursuant to the full implementation of Republic Act
29 No. 11165, otherwise known as the Telecommuting Act; and
30 q) Such other skills requirements as may evolve or be identified by the partners.

1 **ARTICLE VII**

2 **DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS**

3 SEC. 11. *Digital Workforce Week.* – The third week of June shall be designated
4 as the Digital Workforce Week, to coincide with the National Information and
5 Communications Technology (ICT) month promulgated under Proclamation No. 1521,
6 series of 2008, to promote awareness on evolving jobs and skills requirements in
7 digital technology and innovations, government assistance, trainings and
8 certifications, and digital career and business opportunities.

9 **ARTICLE VIII**

10 **SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM**

11 SEC. 12. *Digital Libraries and Learning Hubs.* – The DICT and the National
12 Library of the Philippines shall promote the role of libraries in improving digital
13 inclusion and transform these libraries as providers of digital access, trainings including
14 those for certifications, and support for the development and enhancement of digital
15 skills and competencies of the workers and future members of the workforce.

16 SEC. 13. *Co-Working or Shared Service Facilities.* – The DTI, in coordination
17 with relevant government agencies and in partnership with the private sector, shall
18 establish co-working or shared service facilities to support the development and
19 enhancement of digital skills and competencies of the workers and future members of
20 the workforce.

21 **ARTICLE IX**

22 **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

23 SEC. 14. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within six (6) months from
24 the effectivity of this Act, the NEDA, DOLE, DTI, DICT, DOST, DILG, DepEd, CHED,
25 TESDA, in consultation with relevant government agencies and private sector
26 stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the
27 implementation of this Act.

28 SEC. 15. *Reportorial Requirement.* – The Inter-Agency Council and all
29 implementing agencies shall submit a report to Congress not later than June 30 of
30 each year on the status of the implementation of this Act.

1 SEC. 16. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of the
2 provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act for the year
3 following the approval of this Act.

4 SEC. 17. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, decrees, executive orders and
5 rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
6 hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

7 SEC. 18. *Separability Clause* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
8 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other
9 provisions hereof.

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

12 *Approved,*