



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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

'22 AUG -1 A10 :29

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

S.B. No. 941

Introduced by SEN. WIN GATCHALIAN

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE VIROLOGY AND VACCINE INSTITUTE OF THE
PHILIPPINES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST)¹ emphasized that the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 in 2020 highlighted the need for Research and Development capacities in virology research through the establishment of the Virology and Vaccines Institute of the Philippines (VIP). Even with the availability of vaccines against Covid-19 nowadays, the country must be prepared in the long run by establishing a dedicated government agency that will serve as the premier research and development institute in the field of virology, encompassing all areas in viruses and viral diseases in humans, plants and animals.

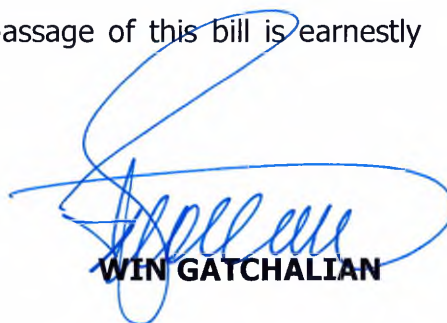
Thus, this bill, in creating the VIP, will provide for a pool of highly-trained local virology experts and appropriate facilities which can enable researchers to rapidly conduct studies on any virus and guide authorities in implementing evidence-informed response strategies.

¹ Department of Science and Technology. "DOST Secretary Emphasizes the Benefits of a PH Virology and Vaccine Institute". <https://www.dost.gov.ph/knowledge-resources/news/74-2022-news/2737-dost-secretary-emphasizes-the-benefits-of-a-ph-virology-and-vaccine-institute.html>

The VIP will focus on building the body of research on virus strains and the diseases they cause to serve as the foundation of applied research studies and the development of diagnostic kits, vaccines, and therapeutics not just for humans, but also for animal and plant diseases that cause significant losses for local farmers and impact animal and agronomic health and food supplies. For example, the Philippines experienced an estimated trade loss of about 1 billion Philippine pesos (approximately US\$ 21 million) after the country saw its first African swine fever outbreak in July 2019, killing 251,450 pigs from culling and reduced national domestic production by 8.5%. In July 2020, a case of the highly infectious H5N6 subtype of the influenza A virus was reported in Pampanga, prompting a poultry farm to slaughter nearly 39,000 chickens to curb a bird flu outbreak. In 2017, the tilapia lake virus killed 101,383 tilapia in Bulacan-based ponds alone. In 2014, the white spot syndrome virus reduced the harvest of penaeid shrimps from 1 to 1.5 tons to as little as 200 kilos per hectare per fishpond. The papaya ringspot virus reduced the yield of the small-scale papaya industry by 80% in the Southern Tagalog area, worth almost 60 million pesos in 1994.²

The VIP will also serve as a collaborative hub for both Filipino and foreign researchers through the availability of its in-house virus gene bank, virus genome laboratory, and virus reference laboratory. The VIP will also provide initiatives to boost technology transfer, including thrusts for sustained production and more importantly, building local capacities in vaccine development, which will benefit not only the health sector in managing persistent viral diseases but also the agricultural sector by providing vaccines for animal diseases that impact livestock farms and fisheries.

In view of these considerations, the urgent passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



WIN GATCHALIAN

² Sales, Reneepearl, et al. "Research priority-setting for human, plant, and animal virology: an online experience for the Virology Institute of the Philippines," Health, research and Policy Systems, <https://health-policy-systems.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12961-021-00723-z>



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**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE VIROLOGY AND VACCINE INSTITUTE OF THE
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*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 "Virology and
2 Vaccine Institute of the Philippines (VIP) Act of 2022."

3

4 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the
5 State:

6 a) To protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill
7 health consciousness among them;

8 b) To undertake appropriate health, manpower development, and
9 research, responsive to the country's health needs and problems;

10 c) To recognize that science and technology are essential for national
11 development and progress;

12 d) To give priority to research and development, invention, innovation,
13 and their utilization; and

1 e) To support indigenous, appropriate, and self-reliant scientific and
2 technological capabilities, and their application to the country's productive
3 systems and national life.

4 To this end, the State shall give high priority to the establishment of an
5 institute that will conduct research and development activities and in-depth
6 studies on the viruses affecting the lives of its people and resources, such as
7 plants and animals, which is vital for the protection of the health of its people
8 and the preservation of the national life.

9

10 SEC. 3. *Objectives.* - This Act seeks to establish a virology institute that
11 shall focus on the following key development areas for virology science and
12 technology applications in plants, animals, and humans:

13 a) Research on viruses using a modern approach such as molecular
14 biology and its application, or biotechnology;

15 b) Development of diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics (Molecular
16 Biotechnology);

17 c) International cooperation and network of databases of virus
18 infections;

19 d) Operation of a virus gene bank, virus genome laboratory, and virus
20 reference laboratory to focus on viruses circulating in the Philippines for disease
21 prevention and epidemiological studies; and

22 e) Operation of a virus high containment laboratory dedicated to the
23 study of highly infectious and highly pathogenic viruses.

24

25 SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.* - As used in this Act:

26 a) *Bacteriophage* refers to any group of viruses that infect specific
27 bacteria, usually causing their disintegration or dissolution;

28 b) *Biosafety* refers to a condition in which the probability of harm, injury
29 and damage resulting from the intentional and unintentional introduction
30 and/or use of a regulated article is within acceptable and manageable levels;

31 c) *Biosecurity* refers to a strategic and integrated approach to analyzing
32 and managing relevant risks to plant, animal and human life and health and

1 associated risks for the environment. It is based on recognition of the critical
2 linkages between sectors and the potential for hazards to move within and
3 between sectors, with system-wide consequences;

4 d) *Diagnostics* refers to methods, tests, techniques, and tools in viral
5 diagnosis for plants, animals and humans;

6 e) *Therapeutics* refers to anti-viral, bacteriophages, nanotechnology
7 treatment approach, nucleic acid-based treatment, remedial agents, drugs for
8 the treatment of viral diseases and infections of plants, animals and humans;

9 f) *Vaccines* refer to products that induce or stimulate active acquired
10 immunity by producing antibodies to a specific infectious agent. It helps the
11 body's immune system to recognize and fight pathogens like viruses or
12 bacteria;

13 g) *Virology* refers to the scientific discipline concerned with the study of
14 the biology of viruses and viral diseases of plant, animal, and human of medical
15 importance and pandemic potential including the distribution, pathogenicity,
16 viral cytopathicity, biochemistry, physiology, molecular biology, biotechnology,
17 ecology, tropism, spillover or interspecies transmission, evolution, and clinical
18 aspects of viruses.

19

20 *SEC. 5. Creation of the Virology and Vaccine Institute of the Philippines.*

21 - The Virology and Vaccine Institute of the Philippines (VIP) is hereby created,
22 which shall be an attached agency under the Department of Science and
23 Technology (DOST) for purposes of policy and program coordination to ensure
24 alignment with national policies and priorities.

25 The VIP shall serve as the premier research and development institute
26 in the field of virology, encompassing all areas in viruses and viral diseases in
27 plants, animals and humans. It shall be a venue for scientists, research
28 institutes and other organizations here in the Philippines and abroad, to work
29 collaboratively to study viruses of agricultural, industrial, clinical, and
30 environmental importance.

31

1 SEC. 6. *Powers, Functions, and Duties.* - To accomplish its mandate, the
2 VIP shall have the following powers, functions, and duties:

3 a) Serve as the lead convener for the formulation of the National Virology
4 Research Agenda, in consultation with all concerned stakeholders, that will
5 encompass researches involving viruses of plant, animal, and human
6 importance;

7 b) Undertake scientific and technological research and development
8 (R&D) in the field of virology;

9 c) Conduct product R&D in the areas of but not limited to diagnostics,
10 therapeutics and vaccines;

11 d) Promote and undertake the transfer of the results of scientific
12 research and development to concerned government agencies, industry, and
13 academe;

14 e) Promote and advocate virology research ethics, biosafety, and
15 biosecurity;

16 f) Develop and maintain an information system on virology science and
17 technology for use by both the public and private sectors;

18 g) Develop and implement, together with other entities concerned,
19 programs for strengthening scientific and technological capabilities in virology
20 and relevant disciplines through human resource development, infrastructure,
21 and institution building;

22 h) Undertake policy research, technology assessment, and other related
23 studies on virology;

24 i) Provide laboratory and technical services on virology;

25 j) Promote and advocate the national programs on virology science and
26 technology; and

27 k) Establish linkages with local and international partners.

28

29 SEC. 7. *Organizational Structure.* - The VIP shall be headed by a
30 Director-General and two (2) Deputy Directors-General - one (1) for Research
31 and Development, and one (1) for Support, Policy, and Linkages.

32 The VIP shall be composed of the following divisions:

- 1 a) Virus Research
- 2 b) Diagnostics and Therapeutics Research
- 3 c) Vaccines Research
- 4 d) Technical Services and Training
- 5 e) Policy, Planning, and Linkages
- 6 f) Finance and Administration

7 The Deputy Director-General for Research and Development shall head
8 the Virus Research; Diagnostics and Therapeutics Research; and Vaccines
9 Research Divisions.

10 The Deputy Director-General for Support, Policy, and Linkages shall head
11 the Technical Services and Training; Policy, Planning, and Linkages; and
12 Finance and Administration Divisions.

13 The VIP shall have technical and administrative support staff and
14 consultants. The consultants may come from the public and private sectors on
15 a consultancy or contractual basis, and shall be granted honoraria or allowances
16 in accordance with existing rules and regulations.

17 Subject to the approval of the Department of Budget and Management
18 (DBM), the VIP shall determine its organizational structure, create new divisions
19 or units as it may deem necessary, and appoint its officers and employees.

20 For this purpose, the VIP shall, in consultation with the DBM, determine
21 the necessary position qualifications and standards for its personnel following
22 civil service laws, rules, and regulations.

23

24 *SEC. 8. Qualifications of the Director-General and Deputy Directors-*
25 *General.* - The Director-General shall have a rank of an Undersecretary, and
26 shall be a qualified expert possessing at least a Bachelor's Degree in Biology,
27 Microbiology and/or an allied discipline; preferably with a doctorate degree in
28 medical sciences and/or in virology-related discipline with three to five years of
29 experience in diagnostic virology.

30 The Director-General shall have overall responsibility for the activities
31 including the supervision of all the staff working in the VIP. In addition, he/she
32 shall be directly responsible for reporting to the Secretary of Science and

1 Technology, and the President of the Philippines, the results of the various
2 diagnostic assays and research studies performed in the institute.

3 Each of the Deputy Directors-General of the VIP shall have a rank of
4 Assistant Secretary. The Deputy Directors-General shall possess at least the
5 educational background of the Director-General.

6

7 SEC. 9. *Term of Office.* - The Director-General and the Deputy Directors-
8 General shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon the
9 recommendation of the DOST Secretary, for a term of seven years. Of those
10 first appointed, the Director General shall hold office for seven years, one
11 Deputy Director-General for five years, and the other Deputy Director-General
12 for three years. Appointment to any vacancy shall be only for the unexpired
13 portion of the term of the predecessor.

14

15 SEC. 10. *The Governing Board.* - The Governing Board shall be the
16 highest policy-making body for the scientific and technological activities of the
17 VIP, composed of the following:

- 18 a) The Secretary of Science and Technology, as Chairperson;
- 19 b) The Secretary of Health, as Co-Chairperson;
- 20 c) The Secretary of Agriculture, as Co-Chairperson;
- 21 d) The Secretary of Trade and Industry, as may be represented by an
22 Undersecretary for Industry Development and Trade Policy;
- 23 e) The Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, as may be
24 represented by an Undersecretary, as member;
- 25 f) The Undersecretary for Research and Development of the DOST, as
26 member;
- 27 g) The Secretary of Foreign Affairs, as may be represented by the
28 Undersecretary for International Economic Relations, as member;
- 29 h) The Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), as
30 member;
- 31 i) The Director of the Research Institute for Tropical Medical Medicine
32 (RITM), as member;

1 j) The Director-General of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), as
2 member;

3 k) The Director-General of the VIP, as member;

4 l) The Executive Director of University of the Philippines-National
5 Institute of Health (UP-NIH), as member; and

6 m) Three (3) representatives from the private sector appointed by the
7 President of the Philippines, as nominated by the Governing Board. These
8 representatives shall have distinguished themselves in the field of medical
9 virology, genomics, plant virology, animal virology, epidemiology, genetic
10 engineering, and other related disciplines.

11 The private sector shall be represented by the following:

12 i. An association of medical or allied-health professionals

13 ii. Philippine Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association or from a
14 recognized pharmaceutical industry

15 iii. An academic institution with research and development
16 activities in the field of medical virology, genomics, plant virology, animal
17 virology, epidemiology, genetic engineering, and other related
18 disciplines.

19 The VIP shall serve as the Secretariat of the Governing Board with the
20 Deputy Director-General for Support, Policy, and Linkages acting concurrently
21 as the Executive Director of the Secretariat.

22
23 SEC. 11. *Functions of the Governing Board.* - The Governing Board shall
24 be the policy-making body for the scientific and technological activities of the
25 VIP. It shall:

26 a) Promulgate rules and regulations regarding the management and
27 operation of the VIP;

28 b) Collect fees, through its Secretariat, in connection with the exercise
29 of its regulatory powers;

30 c) Apply for, receive, and accept bequests, grants, and donation of
31 funds, equipment, materials and services needed for the attainment of its
32 objectives;

1 d) Provide grants, research fund, materials and equipment for the
2 conduct of virology researches by both public and private higher education
3 institutions;

4 e) Establish an editorial office of a refereed journal of virology, and a
5 library which shall collect and preserve books, journals and other reference
6 materials in the field of virology; and

7 f) Perform such other related activities as may be assigned by the DOST
8 Secretary.

9

10 SEC. 12. *Compliance with Existing Government Regulations.* - The VIP
11 shall comply with the procedures, rules and regulations of other Government
12 Offices mandated to oversee the practice of virology and other related
13 disciplines as well as the operation of laboratories, clinics, diagnostics and
14 similar facilities, but not limited to the following: procurement of specimen,
15 supplies, materials, and equipment; handling, storage, the study of specimen;
16 and disposal of specimen, equipment and other forms of waste.

17 The Department of Health (DOH) Health Facilities and Services
18 Regulatory Bureau (HFSRB) shall establish guidelines on the regulation and
19 operation of virology-related facilities, to be assisted by the Department of
20 Agriculture (DA) - Bureau of Animal Industry, DA-Bureau of Plant Industry, and
21 other relevant stakeholders.

22 The DOH-Health Human Resource Development Bureau shall establish
23 guidelines on the practice of virology profession in the country to be assisted
24 by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and its health-related
25 accredited professional organizations, together with the CHED, Department of
26 Labor and Employment, Civil Service Commission, Bureau of Immigration, and
27 other relevant government offices.

28 The DENR through the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) and
29 the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) shall ensure
30 compliance of the VIP and other virology facilities with regard to waste disposal.

1 Finally, research proposals prior to its undertaking within the VIP shall
2 be reviewed by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB) or through
3 its accredited ethics review committees or entities.

4 Processes and regulations of the FDA, Health Technology Assessment
5 Council and/or of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines shall be
6 strictly observed prior to commercialization of any drug, vaccine, diagnostics,
7 device and other similar products.

8 An Inter-Agency Task Force may be created to monitor compliance of all
9 virology-related professions and facilities throughout the country to be headed
10 by the DOH-HFSRB.

11

12 SEC. 13. *Engagement of Balik Scientists and Foreign Experts.* - The VIP
13 may engage the services of Balik Scientists and foreign experts who shall work
14 together with the local scientists and experts, following the terms of reference
15 and compensation structure in accordance with Republic Act No. 11035 or the
16 "Balik Scientist Program Act", and other existing laws.

17

18 SEC. 14. *International Cooperation.* - The VIP shall establish strategic
19 partnerships with the world's leading scientists, virology centers and institutes,
20 and conduct innovative and pioneering researches that will advance the
21 frontiers of virology in the country.

22 The VIP can enter into a memorandum of agreement or understanding
23 with international partners, upon the approval of its Governing Board and in
24 compliance with existing laws, rules, regulations and issuances of the DFA. The
25 DFA shall provide technical, legal and other forms of assistance to the VIP.

26 The Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the
27 Philippines shall also be consulted upon approval of the Governing Board of the
28 VIP.

29

30 SEC. 15. *Interdepartmental Cooperation.* - The VIP shall collaborate with
31 the DOH, Department of Finance (DOF), FDA, RITM and other relevant
32 government agencies, in mobilizing resources such as but not limited to

1 research information, reports, technical expertise, equipment, materials and
2 supplies as may be required to implement this Act.

3

4 SEC. 16. *Inter-Agency Contribution of the VIP.* - The research outputs of
5 the VIP shall be integrated with the plans made by the Inter-Agency Task Force
6 on Emerging Infectious Diseases, as created by Executive Order No. 168 s.
7 2014, or its successor body, for the management of public health emergencies
8 relating to infectious diseases. The research outputs of the VIP shall also be
9 integrated into other plans relating to disease control and prevention.

10

11 SEC. 17. *Private-Public Partnerships (PPPs).* - The Department of Trade
12 and Industry (DTI), the DOH, the Public-Private Partnership Center, and the
13 DOST shall collaborate in seeking Private-Public Partnerships (PPPs) for the
14 development of new industries, products and services where the VIP shall be
15 the main research and development unit.

16 The DOST may also request the assistance of other national and local
17 government agencies in seeking PPPs where the VIP shall be the main research
18 and development unit

19

20 SEC. 18. *Promotion of Virology Industry.* - The DOST, in partnership with
21 the DOH-Health Promotion and Communication Service, DOH-Disease
22 Prevention and Control Bureau, and DTI-Board of Investments, shall jointly
23 develop an industry roadmap for products and services that can be created,
24 improved, or optimized by research from the VIP.

25 As far as practicable, the industry roadmap shall include the use of local
26 materials in the development of new products. The industry that shall be
27 developed or established resulting from the VIP researches shall be included in
28 the national government's priority industries for incentives.

29

30 SEC. 19. *Promotion of Knowledge-transfer and Research in the*
31 *Academe.* - The VIP shall promote the creation of hubs and programs for
32 virology research and development in the academe, particularly in state

1 universities and colleges (SUCs). Towards this end, the VIP shall assist SUCs in
2 the creation of virology courses and programs, open internships for qualified
3 students of higher education institutions (HEIs), and collaborate with SUCs and
4 HEIs in the creation of virology research centers. The CHED shall collaborate
5 with the DOST in the promotion of SUC/HEI-VIP partnerships.

6
7 *SEC. 20. Protection of VIP-developed Intellectual Property.* - The
8 Governing Board of the VIP shall ensure that all technologies developed
9 exclusively by the VIP with full funding from Filipino taxpayers shall be
10 protected by intellectual property laws in accordance with Republic Act No.
11 10055 or the "Technology Transfer Act of 2009", and other applicable laws.

12 Any patent grant or intellectual property right awarded or granted to the
13 VIP shall be held by and in the name of the Philippine Government. In the case
14 of partnerships, where the VIP is a collaborating research partner, the
15 Governing Board shall ensure that technologies co-developed by the VIP shall
16 also be co-attributed, with the corresponding intellectual protections, to the
17 Philippine Government.

18
19 *SEC. 21. Procurement of Specialized Materials, Equipment and Services.*
20 - The VIP shall undertake the procurement of specialized materials, equipment,
21 and services to be used by the VIP in its operation and administration, in the
22 most expeditious manner, as exemptions from the provisions of Republic Act
23 No. 9184 or the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and other relevant
24 laws: *Provided*, That during a public health emergency, the following shall be
25 observed:

26 a) Less stringent procurement procedures allowing negotiated
27 procurement, higher caps on allowable down payment for procurement of
28 goods, supplies, equipment and services;

29 b) Authority to the DOST Secretary to approve advance payment of more
30 than 15% for procurement of goods, supplies, equipment and services, for
31 faster facilitation;

1 c) Simplified process for foreign procurement especially with specialized
2 equipment, reagents, and supplies not available in the Philippines;

3 d) Exemption from customs duties and taxes for all VIP supplies and
4 equipment procured abroad; and

5 e) Exemption from taxes on income generated through training and
6 other delivery of services of VIP.

7
8 *SEC. 22. Official Site of VIP.* - A lot with an area equivalent to at least
9 five (5) hectares under the administration of the Bases Conversion and
10 Development Authority (BCDA) within the New Clark Economic Zone in Tarlac
11 shall be allocated exclusively for the Institute, its research facilities, and
12 laboratories. The biosafety infrastructure shall be designed based on risk
13 assessment for handling specific pathogens following the WHO guidelines on
14 the establishment of a virology laboratory in developing countries.

15
16 *SEC. 23. Entitlement to Magna Carta Benefits.* - Qualified employees of
17 the VIP shall be covered by Republic Act No. 8439, otherwise known as "Magna
18 Carta for Scientists, Engineers, Researchers and Other Science and Technology
19 Personnel in Government".

20
21 *SEC. 24. Virology Research Fund.* - There is hereby created a Virology
22 Research Fund to be used and administered by the VIP following existing
23 government budgeting, accounting, and auditing rules and regulations. The
24 Fund shall be sourced from the following:

25 a) The initial amount of Two Billion pesos (P 2,000,000,000.00) to be
26 taken from the current fiscal year's appropriation, in case the General
27 Appropriation Act (GAA) was approved before this law is enacted. This is the
28 same amount stated in Section 29 hereof;

29 b) The income produced from its operations, technology transfer, and
30 licensing agreements;

31 c) Loans, contributions, grants, bequests, gifts, and donations whether
32 from local or foreign sources. Provided, That acceptance of grants, bequests,

1 contributions, and donations from foreign governments shall be subject to the
2 approval of the President upon the recommendation of the Secretary of the
3 DOST and Secretary of the DFA.

4 The Secretary of DOST, with the approval of the NEDA and
5 subsequently, the DOF, is hereby granted the authority to enter into loan
6 agreements with foreign financial institutions.

7

8 *SEC. 25. Authority to Solicit, Receive Donations, Grants and the Like. -*

9 The VIP may solicit, negotiate with, and receive from any public or private
10 domestic or foreign sources legacies, gifts, donations, grants, endowments,
11 contributions or other transfers of ownership and/or possession of real or
12 personal properties of all kinds in favor and for the benefit of the VIP, which
13 shall be exempt from donor's tax and shall all be part of the special account in
14 the general fund managed by the DOF.

15 The VIP shall prescribe the measures necessary for the proper use,
16 maintenance and safekeeping of said donations, grants, endowments,
17 contributions or transfers and the compliance of the terms and conditions
18 thereon, if any, in accordance with pertinent accounting and auditing laws, rules
19 and regulations.

20

21 *SEC. 26. Use of Income. -* The VIP shall be authorized to use all of the
22 income generated from its operations, as well as donations, bequests, grants,
23 endowments, and the like, for the upgrading of its physical and human
24 resources, and for the augmentation of its budget.

25

26 *SEC. 27. Mandatory Adoption of Publicly-Funded Technologies. -*

27 Mandatory adoption of publicly-funded and generated technologies developed
28 by the VIP, whenever feasible and practicable, shall strictly be implemented by
29 all government entities or instrumentalities.

30 All national government agencies (NGAs), government-owned-and-
31 controlled corporations (GOCCs), SUCs, and local government units (LGUs),

1 performing science and technology development projects shall adopt publicly-
2 funded technologies.

3

4 SEC. 28. *Annual Report.* - The VIP shall submit its annual report to the
5 President, and to the Committees on Science and Technology in both Chambers
6 of Congress, not later than the 30th of March of every year following the
7 effectivity of this Act. The annual report shall provide a full and detailed account
8 of the status of the implementation of this Act and policy recommendations.

9

10 SEC. 29. *Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.* - There shall be a
11 Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on the implementation of this Act,
12 which shall be jointly chaired by the Chairpersons of the Committees on Science
13 and Technology of the Senate and House of Representatives.

14 It shall be composed of, as members, the Chairpersons of the Senate
15 Committees on Health and Demography; and Agriculture, Food and Agrarian
16 Reform; the Chairpersons of the Committees on Health; and Food and
17 Agriculture of the House of Representatives; and two others from each chamber
18 of Congress to be respectively appointed by the Senate President, and the
19 Speaker of the House of Representatives.

20

21 SEC. 30. *Appropriations.* - The sum of Two Billion Pesos (Php
22 2,000,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the initial operation fund of the
23 VIP from the current fiscal year's appropriation. Thereafter, the amount needed
24 for its operation shall be included in the GAA.

25

26 SEC. 31. *Transitory Provisions.* - Upon the establishment of the VIP, the
27 functions and assets of the concerned DOH units shall be transferred to the VIP
28 without need of conveyance, transfer of assignment.

29 (a) For the year during which this Act was approved, the unexpended
30 portion of the budget of the offices and units transferred shall be utilized for
31 establishing the VIP and initiating its operations, including the formulation of
32 the rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this Act;

1 (b) To the greatest extent possible and in accordance with existing laws,
2 all employees of the affected offices, agencies and units shall be absorbed by
3 the VIP.

4 Personnel hired on a permanent basis and with appointments attested
5 by the CSC who may be affected by the transition of DOST units to VIP, or who
6 will not be absorbed in the new positions of the new staffing pattern of the
7 different offices in the VIP, shall have the option to:

8 (1) Be transferred to other units/offices within the DOST without
9 reduction in pay; or

10 (2) Avail of the applicable retirement benefits and separation
11 incentives as provided by existing laws;

12 (c) Incumbent DOST officials and employees of affected DOST offices
13 may be considered as a VIP official or employee, subject to competency
14 evaluation and CSC regulations;

15 (d) Research grants acquired during the transition of DOST transferred
16 units to VIP shall be utilized solely for the grants' intended purposes for each
17 of the affected units or offices; and

18 (e) Existing contracts and agreements entered into by the affected
19 offices with third parties prior to the enactment of this Act shall remain valid.

20

21 *SEC. 32. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* -The DOST Secretary, in
22 consultation with DBM, DOH, CSC, DOF, DFA, CHED, and other relevant
23 government agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations
24 within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act.

25

26 *SEC. 33. Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part thereof is held
27 invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall
28 remain in full force and effect.

29

30 *SEC. 34. Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, presidential decrees or
31 issuances, executive orders, letter of instruction, administrative orders, rules,

1 and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provision of this Act are
2 hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

3

4 SEC. 35. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
5 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation in the
6 Philippines.

Approved,