

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 9782



**INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS**

**AN ACT
JUMPSTARTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESSES AND ENSURING
EMPLOYABILITY OF THE PHILIPPINE WORKFORCE THROUGH
EXPANDED COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING AND SKILLS TRAINING,
TO DRIVE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH,
AND ESTABLISHING FOR THIS PURPOSE A NATIONAL FUTURE SKILLS
COUNCIL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant loss of human lives and caused tremendous economic and social disruption worldwide. It has posed an unprecedented challenge to public health, food and education systems, livelihood and productivity, and social protection programs, among other areas of government.

In the Philippines, the necessity of nationwide lockdowns, stringent community quarantines, and social distancing protocols to prevent the spread of the virus and contain the same; impeded physical travel and adversely impacted business operations, ultimately leading to closure of businesses and millions of unemployed Filipinos. In 2020, unemployment rate rose to 10.3 percent, accounting for 4.5 million unemployed Filipinos in the labor force whose skillsets can be utilized and maximized, given suitable training development and employment opportunities.¹ Wholesale and retail trade was most affected during the pandemic while temporary closures were

¹ Philippine Statistics Office. 2021. 2020 Annual Preliminary Estimates of Labor Force Survey (LFS). <https://psa.gov.ph/content/2020-annual-preliminary-estimates-labor-force-survey-lfs>

most widespread among smaller enterprises.² Poor and vulnerable families were disproportionately affected from the reduction in loss of jobs, constrained mobility, and access to basic food and health services.

Digitalization or technological transformations compound the challenges caused by the pandemic especially in the labor market. According to the International Labor Organization, an estimated “7.2 million workers are exposed to a double-tiered risk of job disruption due to digitalization and COVID-19.”³ Occupations most susceptible to the risks of digitalization are those classified under “machine terrain” (*e.g.* manufacturing, and transportation and storage, electrical and electronic equipment assemblers, etc.); and “collapsing” sectors (*e.g.* accommodation and food services, and arts, entertainment and recreation industries, etc.). In the last few years, non-routine cognitive occupations and/or jobs automation has been gaining momentum while that of routine occupations has been steadily decreasing.⁴ This reveals an impending loss of jobs and skills shortage with the shift of demand for higher-order and cognitive skills continues to unfold. As a result, while the demand for higher-order and cognitive skills will continue increasing, jobs that depended on lower-skilled labor across multiple industries will be wiped out.

The program will be synergistic with the National Employment Recovery Strategy (NERS) 2021-2023, in the medium term, as it focuses on policy responses regarding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to the labor market and the rapid industry transformation through Industry 4.0. It shares the objectives for the program, such as: improved access of employment generation with livelihood and training opportunities, improvement of employability, wellness and productivity of workers in a changing environment, and support to existing and emerging businesses⁵.

Notably, the disruptions caused by the pandemic, opens up other avenues for government, schools and enterprises to adopt alternative approaches to cope and ensure continuity of service delivery and operations. Flexible and blended working arrangements, distance learning, and online

² Asian Development Bank. 2020. The Covid-19 impact on Philippine business. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/622161/covid-19-impact-philippine-business-enterprise-survey.pdf>

³ International Labor Organization. 2020. COVID-19 labour market impact in the Philippines: Assessment and national policy responses. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-manila/documents/publication/wcms_762209.pdf

⁴ International Labor Organization. 2020. The Future of Work in the Philippines: Assessing the impact of technological changes on occupations and sectors. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-manila/documents/publication/wcms_762207.pdf

⁵ Joint Memorandum Circular No. 001-2021: Constituting the Inter-Agency Task Force on the National Employment Recovery Strategy 2021-2023

delivery platforms all highlighted the significance of digitization in this agile environment. In this light, digitization and innovation must be harnessed to bring optimal value for government and its citizens, and businesses and employees alike; and likewise ensure equitable access for all.

Section 3, Article XIII of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that the State shall afford full protection to labor and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all. Republic Act No. 11293 or the Philippine Innovation Act places innovation as the crux of national development policies and sustainable economic growth. It underpins that digitization and innovation can be harnessed to opportunities for government and its citizens, and businesses and employees; and ultimately, ensure inclusivity development. More so, the law endeavors to institutionalize support and linkages in the areas of education, training, research and development towards promoting innovation and digitization. However, the law lacks the impetus to strengthen the role of education in the accelerating innovation and sociocultural transformation as well as supporting labor market transitions in the face of the Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0. Skills training and competency-based development are at the forefront of driving competitiveness and promoting economic growth in the midst of globalization and technological innovations.

The Jobs Next Bill seeks to encourage and incentivize worker upskilling and reskilling to stimulate innovation literacy; and support the labor force to adopt to technologies that have the potential to disrupt jobs. It aims to seamlessly integrate global skills trend with domestic industries' skills through profound and innovative transformation in high-quality training and skills development. It is necessary to harmonize policies and plans from different government agencies, and integrate industry needs and support to create a comprehensive and versatile roadmap that can be scaled at a nationwide level.

Skills development is a prerequisite to a transition to a green and sustainable economic growth. As such, “improving the quality, skills development employability and sustainable livelihoods”⁶ will be required to augment skills gap for green jobs across sectors. The Jobs Next bill will also forge the synergy of skills development required for green jobs, strategies, plans with the incentives provided for business enterprises to create and sustain green jobs under the Republic Act No. 10771 or the Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016.

⁶ Asian Development Bank. 2018. Education and skills for inclusive growth, green jobs and the greening of economies in Asia. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/385041/education-skills-green-jobs.pdf>

As the country slowly pivots to recovery measures, this presents a window of opportunity to rethink how economies and businesses will react and adapt⁷ to the 'new normal.' It is an opportunity to build and shift to resilient and sustainable economic and business reforms that will maximize the realities of an uncertain environment.

The timing cannot be better for the Jobs Next bill: to ride on the change ushered in by the momentum, and channel that to pave the way for the Philippines to thrive in the fourth industrial revolution.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ALFRED VARGAS

⁷ Deloitte Center for Government Insights. 2020. Transforming government post-COVID-19: How flipping orthodoxies can reinvent government operating models. <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/public-sector/articles/transforming-government-post-covid-19.html>

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

**CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Jobs Next Act of 2021.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force and commits to worker protection and promotion of their welfare. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to safeguard the rights and welfare of the Philippine workforce by fostering innovation in skills training and competency-based professional development, in the midst of global trends and technological innovations.

Pursuant to Section 2 of the Philippine Innovation Act of 2019, the State shall strengthen its support to innovation as a vital component in workforce development, particularly in developing a robust pool of skilled, talented and creative people. To this end, an ecosystem of education institutions, businesses, private organizations, government agencies, and local government units is key to the development of a comprehensive program that will stimulate and incentivize innovation literacy and inclusive skills development and opportunities among Filipino workforce and entrepreneurs, including women and the youth, and businesses alike.

It is likewise the declared policy of the State that labor is vital in promoting sustainable development. Pursuant to Section 2 of the Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016, the State shall identify needed skills, develop training programs, and train and certify workers for jobs in a range of industries that produce goods and render services for the benefit of the environment, conserve natural resources for the future generation, and ensure the sustainable development of the country and its transition into a green economy. The green skills for sustainable growth are significant and can only be realized with innovation and transformation in workforce development.

SECTION 3. Objectives – The objective of this Act is to institutionalize a coherent, integrated, and holistic system of technical skills and competency-based development that will harness and strengthen innovation and competitiveness of at least ten percent (10%) of the total Philippine workforce every five (5) years and promote inclusive opportunities and sustainable growth, amidst effects of technological innovations and other external disruptions. The specific objectives of this Act are as follows:

- a) To equip the Philippine workforce with technical skills and competencies that will be relevant in the Fourth Industrial Revolution;
- b) To professionalize and promote a culture of innovation in skills and competency-based development training offered for the Philippine workforce;
- c) To improve access and strengthen linkage of employment opportunities with skills training and workforce development;
- d) To encourage continuous upskilling and reskilling of the Philippine workforce and entrepreneurs to gain competencies and support career transition in existing and emergent jobs;
- e) To encourage private sector recognition and participation in career development based on technical skills and competency development;
- f) To ensure inclusivity in the governance of future skills training, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups women, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples;
- g) To ensure alignment, effective coordination and elimination of fragmentation of innovation programs and policies, at all levels; and
- h) To enhance the competitiveness and resiliency of the Philippine workforce, jobs, industries and sectors affected by technological and other external innovations and disruptions.

SECTION 4. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined as follows:

- (a) *Absentee payroll funding* is a grant to help employers defray the manpower costs incurred when they send their employees for certifiable skills training during working hours.
- (b) *Cognitive and meta-cognitive skills*⁸ includes critical thinking, creative thinking, learning-to-learn and self-regulation.

⁸ https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/skills/Skills_for_2030_concept_note.pdf

- (c) *Critical core skills*⁹ or *soft skills* are broadly defined as a set of observable transferable behaviors that can be applied across sectors, functional areas and job roles under the clusters of critical thinking, workplace interaction, and staying relevant¹⁰.
- (d) *Digital*¹¹ or *technological literacy* refers to the skills and ability to access, evaluate, integrate, create and communicate information through writing and other media on various digital technologies such as internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices, etc. towards enhancing the learning process through problem-solving and critical thinking.
- (e) *Displacement effect*¹² refers to jobs lost due to the automation of tasks through the application of 4IR technology.
- (f) *Emerging jobs or occupations* refers to jobs that form, whether totally new or an evolution of existing job, because of changes in production technologies, innovations, market conditions, regulations, and so forth. Emerging jobs may not be most prevalent at the time of observation, but they exhibit a pace of growth within a period of time.
- (g) *Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)* or *Industry 4.0*¹³ refers to a range of technologies, including artificial intelligence, big data, internet of things, cloud computing, quantum computing, robotics, genetic engineering, among others that impact the workplace, and can be applied across all sectors that combine the physical, digital and biological worlds.
- (h) *Future Skills* refers to essential employability skills¹⁴ that are relevant to jobs in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which pertain to: critical core and technical skills and competencies¹⁵ of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills; practical and physical skills; social and emotional skills.
- (i) *Generic skills and competencies*¹⁶ or *employability skills*¹⁷ are key, common, and basic transferable skills across job roles that enable

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2018. Digital skills critical for jobs and social inclusion. <https://en.unesco.org/news/digital-skills-critical-jobs-and-social-inclusion#:~:text=Digital%20skills%20are%20defined%20as,to%20access%20and%20manage%20information.>

⁹ Skills Future Singapore. n.d. Critical core skills. <https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/skills-framework/criticalcoreskills>

¹⁰ Skills Future Singapore. n.d. Critical core skills – what they are and why they matter. https://www.myskillsfuture.gov.sg/content/portal/en/career-resources/career-resources/education-career-personal-development/Critical_Core_Skills_What_They_Are_And_Why_They_Matter.html

¹¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2018. Digital skills critical for jobs and social inclusion. <https://en.unesco.org/news/digital-skills-critical-jobs-and-social-inclusion#:~:text=Digital%20skills%20are%20defined%20as,to%20access%20and%20manage%20information.>

¹² ADB. 2018

¹³ ADB. 2018

¹⁴ Nafea, R. & Toplu, E. Future of education in Industry 4.0: Educational digitization – A Canadian case study. <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/future-of-education-in-industry-40/232599>

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¹⁶ Skills Future Singapore. n.d. Critical core skills – what they are and why they matter. https://www.myskillsfuture.gov.sg/content/portal/en/career-resources/career-resources/education-career-personal-development/Critical_Core_Skills_What_They_Are_And_Why_They_Matter.html

individuals to be employable and employed, help every individual adapt to new job demand, and facilitate their career mobility.

- (j) *Inclusive Innovation Industrial Strategy (i3S)*¹⁸ refer to a strategy implemented by the Department of Trade and Industry which aims to grow innovative and globally competitive manufacturing, agriculture and services industries, while strengthening their linkages between domestic and global value chains with innovation at the core of the country's strategic policies and programs. One of its strategic actions include upskilling and reskilling the Philippine workforce.
- (k) *Practical and physical skills*¹⁹, which include using new information and communication technology devices.
- (l) *Productivity effect*²⁰ or *scale effect* refers to automation improving productivity and lowering production costs.
- (m) *Reskilling*²¹ refers to the process of learning new skills or training workers to adapt to a different job and to allow them to be employable.
- (n) *Social and emotional skills*²², which include empathy, self-efficacy, responsibility and collaboration.
- (o) *Technical skills and competencies*²³ refer to occupation, job-specific skills and competencies, and individual needs to perform various job tasks.
- (p) *Technological disruptions or disruptive technologies*²⁴ refer to innovations such as predictive analytics, automation, internet of things, big data, robotics and Artificial intelligence, that significantly transform industry structures, processes and practices.
- (q) *Training or Training Programs* refer to a set of activities and processes for a person to acquire desired skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values.
- (r) *Upskilling*²⁵ refers to the process of acquiring new and relevant competencies to optimize performance in the face of technological

¹⁷ Australian National Training Authority. 2003. Defining generic skills: At a glance.

https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/file/0020/4457/nr2102b.pdf

¹⁸ Department of Trade and Industry. n.d. Inclusive Innovation Industrial Strategy.

<http://innovate.dti.gov.ph/resources/i3s-strategy/inclusive-innovation-industrial-strategy/>

¹⁹ https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/skills/Skills_for_2030_concept_note.pdf

²⁰ ADB. 2018

²¹ ADB. 2018

²² https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/skills/Skills_for_2030_concept_note.pdf

²³ Skills Future Singapore. n.d. Develop a skilled workforce. <https://www.ssg.gov.sg/wsqs/wsqs-for-employers.html>

²⁴ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_579554.pdf

²⁵ ADB. 2018

innovation, as well as improving existing skills to upgrade future skills profile.

CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL FUTURE SKILLS COUNCIL

SECTION 5. *Establishment of the National Future Skills Council.* – A National Future Skills Council, hereinafter referred to as the “NFSC”, shall be created, to carry out the policies set forth in this law. The NFSC shall generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education, training, research and development towards prompting innovation in workforce employability.

It shall be composed of the Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) as Chairperson; a Co-Chairperson to be chosen from the private sector members, to be rotated among the private sector members of the NFSC every three (3) years; the Secretaries of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Information Communications Technology (DICT); and eight (8) representatives from the private sector as members; *provided, that*, one representative is to be nominated each by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), Management Association of the Philippines (MAP), Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (FINEX), Philippine Business for Education (PBE), Philippine Women's Economic Network (PHILWEN), and three other private sector organizations, which can either be area or industry-based associations, to be appointed by the Department of Trade and Industry for a term of three (3) years.

The department secretaries may designate their representatives, who shall sit in a permanent capacity, with no less than Undersecretary in rank, and their acts shall be considered as the acts of their principals.

SECTION 6. *Mandate of the NFSC* – The NFSC shall serve as the policy and advisory body towards the achievement of the objectives of this law. It shall promote future skills development through the development of a future skills framework, and catalyze the same by fostering partnership with public and private partners and providing funding. The Council shall have the following functions:

- (a) Approve the development of a Philippine Future Skills Roadmap and ensure that it aligns with the current and comprehensive Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis;
- (b) Drive partnerships with private sector, training organizations, and higher education institutions for future skills development, industry training programs, and other initiatives;
- (c) Provide advice to DTI on relevant trends and updates on innovative workforce development and Jobs Next Program;

- (d) Approve the schedule of financial support to trainees, whether for individuals or corporations and other organizations;
- (e) Approve funding support to local government units (LGUs), industry bodies or associations for the upskilling and reskilling of their workforce with future skills, *Provided, That*, the fund requests meet the criteria to be set by the NFSC;
- (f) Approve receipt of funding through official development assistance, grants, donations, collections and other forms of assistance from public or private entities, whether domestic or foreign; *Provided, That* the NFSC is hereby authorized to prioritize funding the objectives of this law, in negotiating and utilizing long-term concessional official development assistance.
- (g) Oversee the implementation of this law and ensure synergy among different government agencies towards the achievement of the objectives of this law.

CHAPTER III FUTURE SKILLS BUREAU

SECTION 7. *Creation of a Future Skills Bureau* – To ensure the attainment of the objectives of this Act, a Future Skills Bureau is hereby created under the DTI, herein referred to as the “Bureau”, to be the lead implementing agency of the Jobs Next Program. The Bureau shall prioritize and focus on the needs of emerging and future workforce skills across industry sectors. Relative to this law, it shall have the following mandate:

- (a) Implement, monitor, and ensure strict compliance by stakeholders of the provisions of this Act;
- (b) Develop the Philippine Future Skills Roadmap, that shall serve as the national strategy to enable the Philippines to be a global leader in future skills. Anchored on the DTI’s Inclusive Innovation Industrial Strategy (i3S), the Roadmap shall be guided by the following key thrusts: Technical and digital skills competitiveness, Innovation, and Productivity; *provided, that*, the Roadmap shall also be guided by the Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis, which shall be updated regularly;
- (c) Drive the conduct of a Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis that will provide a comprehensive survey and assessment of future technical skills requirements for new and emerging jobs or occupations or to a certain position level, job and/or industry due to technological disruptions or Fourth Industrial Revolution; and facilitate the identification of priority areas for implementation, whether cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, critical core or soft skills, practical and physical skills social and emotional skills, technical skills and competencies, or employability skills: *Provided, That* the Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis project shall facilitate the formulation of the Future Skills

Roadmap and execution of the Jobs Next Program Online Portal; *Provided, Further,* That the Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis of DTI unifies various agencies' activities that are similar or related to labor market intelligence or monitoring;

- (d) Establish or support accreditation or certification schemes and other measures for eligible workforce participants, private companies, training organizations and education institutions, and eligible non-degree training programs to enhance the standards of future skills training and education;
- (e) Formulate and standardize skills training and competency requirements and quality standards for identified programs for an occupation, sector and industry;
- (f) Through industry sector partners and TESDA, develop workforce skills qualifications per sector that map out general and technical skills competencies which individuals can train and acquire credentials;
- (g) Determine financial support amount to trainees whether individual, company, or supported projects, subject to the approval of the NFSC;
- (h) Formulate and standardize eligibility requirements for target beneficiaries, whether for the individual, local government, company or organization;
- (i) Provide advice to NIC on relevant trends and updates on innovative workforce development and Jobs Next Program;
- (j) Develop a Jobs Next Program Online Portal to provide relevant information and resource materials on technical skills and competency-based training opportunities for workforce participants and employers;
- (k) Develop funding models to ensure sustainability of the Jobs Next Program;
- (l) Coordinate with various government agencies, build partnership agreements with private sector, and such other means that will make more efficient and effective the implementation of this law; and
- (m) Identify regulatory gaps and technological innovations not sufficiently addressed by this Act or by existing laws or regulations, and recommend appropriate executive or legislative measures, including those can be undertaken by the DTI on its own, that supports technical skills and competency-based training development

The Bureau shall work closely with the NFSC. It shall convene public consultations or inter-agency meetings, in coordination with other government agencies, to ensure multi-stakeholder inputs in the development of the Jobs Next Program.

The Bureau shall be organized within six (6) months after the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Composition of the Bureau* – The Bureau shall be headed by a Director to be appointed by the President of the Philippines, as recommended by the DTI Secretary. The Director shall be nominated by the NFSC.

The Director shall oversee the day-to-day operations of the Bureau and shall be assisted by three (3) Assistant Directors each for policy and administration, enforcement, and operations.

The DTI Secretary shall determine the organizational structure and staffing of the pattern of the Bureau, subject to the approval of the Department of Budget and Management.

CHAPTER IV

CONDUCT OF THE LABOR MARKET INTELLIGENCE SURVEY AND ANALYSIS AND ESTABLISHING THE JOBS NEXT PROGRAM

SECTION 9. *Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis* – To ensure a data-driven and service-oriented Jobs Next Program, the DTI shall commission the conduct of the Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis, which shall be implemented in close coordination with the private sector, training organizations and higher education institutions, and updated every year or earlier, as may be determined by the NFSC for justifiable reasons. It shall include but will not be limited to the following:

- (a) Overview of global skills trend and domestic industry needs, as well as current workforce skills landscape, including, but not limited to, conventional businesses, micro, small and medium enterprises, and innovative start-ups:
 - 1. Size and characteristics of the sectoral labor market which includes the demand for and supply of labor and the intersection thereof;
 - 2. Factors that influence labor market and economic conditions, such as economic, industry, or occupational profiles and projections;
 - 3. Industry, socioeconomic and occupational characteristics;
- ~~(b)~~ The scope of the Labor Market Intelligence and Analysis shall be conducted at a level of analysis to ensure comprehensive quantitative and qualitative labor information allowing for appropriate analysis and interpretation
- (c) Data on sectoral, occupational, technological and geographical changes, specifically on:
 - 1. Needs and expectations of sectors and industries;
 - 2. Current and future labor market trends from the private sector;
 - 3. Jobs or occupations that have been displaced due to disruptive technologies, the 4IR, climate change or other emergent factors, especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups;

- (d) Existing and emerging jobs or occupations, sectors, and industries, and corresponding technical skills and competencies in the 4IR to ensure employability and support career transition and development;
- (e) Capacity and immediate results from education, training and job placement from available education and training programs instituted by the Jobs Next Program and others, and other government policies;
- (f) Standardized tools of technical skills training and competency requirements, and accredited technical skills training programs and initiatives for existing and emergent occupation, sector and industry;
- (g) Perceived value of education, certificate programs, and technical skills and competency-based projects and activities, and related jobs from the following:
 - 1. Job search behavior;
 - 2. Job seeker motivation;
 - 3. Digital skills sets;
 - 4. Reskilling, upskilling, internship and job placement after graduation and/or completion; and
- (h) Identification of training partners from the Private Sector, Training Organizations, and Higher Education Institutions.

The Bureau shall commence the Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis upon its establishment or earlier, as may be directed by the NFSC. It shall utilize labor market information from government-supported large national surveys (Labor Force Survey), public and private employment services, development organizations providing sources of educational data, bodies representing employers or sectors, ODA-funded surveys, and other alternative tech-based, data-science tools, among others.

SECTION 10. Jobs Next Program – The Jobs Next Program provides an operational mechanism for the Philippine workforce to access educational and training programs and gain future skills. The Program has three main services, without prejudice to other services that may be created by the Bureau, subject to the approval of the NFSC:

- (a) **Individual skills voucher** – Eligible beneficiaries may obtain skills vouchers to either fully cover or subsidize eligible training or course fees, as may be determined by the Bureau.
- (b) **Employer training support** – Financial support to employer-sponsored trainings for the upskilling or reskilling of their employees to gain future skills competencies. Financial support coverage shall include but is not limited to training or course fee and absentee payroll funding, the amount of which will be determined by the Bureau.
- (c) **Future skills projects** – Funding support to local government or industry association projects for upskilling or reskilling a determined

number of individuals to gain future skills competencies. Proponents of future skills project must submit a project proposal to apply for funding support. The Bureau shall develop an application process that includes capacity to implement, project impact and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism as criteria.

For upskilling and/or reskilling, an individual may access skills training support under the Jobs Next program through any of the above-mentioned services, provided that s/he will not be taking the same skills training programs or courses.

The program shall be evaluated using tools and approaches aligned with its goals, context, and stage of development, and shall form part of the basis for the review and updating of the same, and the approved Future Skills Roadmap under Section 7 of this Act.

SECTION 11. *Jobs Next Program Online Portal* – The Bureau shall set up a one-stop shop digital platform that shall facilitate access to the Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis, the Jobs Next Program, technical skills and competency-based training opportunities, amongst others. It shall have the following data-driven and service-oriented objectives and functions, respectively:

- (a) Quality data to improve workforce analysis, which in turn shall create in-depth intelligence to translate into more strategic policy interventions on the future skills job market,
- (b) Workforce Participants, jobseekers, employed and underemployed, shall be supported to make informed career decisions, training choices, and employment facilitation, and improve standing in the labor market given the following:
 - 1. Selection of career interests, learning pathways, and job roles in the labor market;
 - 2. Access to technical skills and competency-based development trainings and initiatives, work-based trainings for upskilling and reskilling, funding support modalities, and possible employment opportunities;
 - 3. Access to work-based training opportunities provided by companies;
 - 4. Repository of electronic copy of certificates obtained.
- (c) Employers shall be supported in improving business performance and productivity by the increased ability to hire efficiently, optimal new hires, and improved capacity of their human resources given the following:
 - 1. Existing and emerging technical skills and competencies relevant to a job role and occupation in a given sector or industry;
 - 2. Access to upskilling and reskilling opportunities for employees; and
 - 3. Access to accredited training organizations and funding support modalities.

To spread access to the portal, DOLE's Public Employment Service Offices (PESO), shall support the Program's implementation.

SECTION 12. *Priority Group of Workers* – The Jobs Next Program shall introduce and implement different modalities to provide upskilling and reskilling of the labor force, belonging to jobs at high-risk of displacement because of technological and external disruptions. Workers from disadvantaged and vulnerable sectors are, likewise, prioritized to give them equal opportunity to participate and grow in the 4IR economy. Support provided to workforce participants shall not be subjected to age restrictions, current employment status, and educational attainment, *Provided, That*, specific technical skills training program indicate pre-requisites.

SECTION 13. *Training Modalities* – Training modalities for this program include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) Work-study degree programs and professional courses; (b) Traineeship; (c) Company-training; (d) Company attachment. The Bureau shall ensure that the Jobs Next Program is responsive to the recommendations under the Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis, and aligned with regional and provincial development plans.

SECTION 14. *Eligible Training Programs* – Training programs and initiatives, either government- or industry-led, shall be assessed and accredited on the basis of skills and competencies for existing and emerging jobs determined in the Future Skills Roadmap; *Provided That*, the Bureau shall automatically register industry-acknowledged or -accredited skills trainings and certifications in the roster of eligible training programs; *Provided, Further*, that training programs already accredited by DepEd, CHED, or TESDA shall likewise be automatically registered by the Bureau.

To enhance competitiveness of both existing and emergent jobs, eligibility shall be open to all industries, *Provided, That*, the Bureau shall develop priority eligible programs, consistent and aligned with DTI's I3s, and the Philippine Future Skills Roadmap.

CHAPTER V IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENT

SECTION 15. *National Economic Development Authority (NEDA)*. – The NEDA shall provide strategy and policy alignment between the economic innovation strategy and workforce development in the 4IR pursuant to the National Innovation Agenda and Strategy Document.

SECTION 16. *Department of Science and Technology (DOST)*. – The DOST shall support accreditation or certification schemes and other measures for eligible workforce participants, training organizations and education institutions, and eligible training programs by harmonizing the same with emphasis on sectors relevant to innovation and technology such as science, technology, engineering and math fields and creative industries.

Together with the DTI, it shall collaborate and create avenues for knowledge diffusion and capacity building in skills and competency-based training development in the formulation of eligibility criteria and the Future Skills Roadmap; *Provided, that*, it shall be aligned with the sustainable development goals and green criteria in industries supported by the Program.

SECTION 17. *Department of Information Communications Technology (DICT).* – The DICT shall be responsible for improved physical innovation structure and broadband access that will underpin inclusive future skills and employment opportunities for all in both urban and rural areas.

In coordination with industry partners, namely private businesses, training organizations and higher education institutions, the DICT shall support the design of the Jobs Next Online Portal which will provide transparent, efficient and innovative engagement with workforce participants, training organizations and higher education institutions. The DICT shall also direct and mandate zero-rated internet access for the Jobs Next Program and all related training platforms under it.

SECTION 18. *Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).* – The DOLE shall mobilize its Public Employment Service Offices (PESO) in local government units to support the implementation of this Act, including but not limited to information dissemination, referral, career coaching or counseling.

Complementing the Future Skills Roadmap and Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis, current and updated DOLE plans and resources shall provide information on available skills supply to the specific skills demands of industries, skills for lifelong learning and employability across all sectors; and engagement with employers, workforce participants, social partners, education and training institutions, and other government agencies.

DOLE shall also provide guidance in the compliance of employer participants on labor laws and other relevant issuances in the implementation of technical skills and competency-based development training courses and programs.

SECTION 19. *Department of Education (DepEd).* – The DepEd shall support DTI in supervising the implementation of NFSC-Standardized Qualifications in accredited technical skills and competency-based development training activities and programs; and in qualification of eligible workforce participants, training organizations and education institutions.

The Program will be complemented by alternative training modules programs and strategies implemented by DepEd for lifelong learning of those in vulnerable groups and marginalized communities. This ensures inclusiveness in learning delivery modalities and identified beneficiaries.

SECTION 20. *Commission on Higher Education (CHED).* – CHED shall support the DTI in the accreditation of eligible training programs and partner higher education institutions by ensuring that quality standards implemented in the higher education system are met and satisfied by the same.

It shall promote responsive, innovative and competitive in the design and formulation of courses, modules, and curriculum for technical skills and competency-based training activities and programs.

SECTION 21. *Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).* – The TESDA shall support DTI in the accreditation of eligible training programs and training providers, identification of general and future skills, as well as the alignment of funding programs for eligible workforce participants in the Program.

The TESDA shall support DTI in the implementation of this Act ensuring high quality of training and standards in institutions under its jurisdiction. TESDA shall provide technical assistance to DTI in the development of workforce skills qualifications per sector and other areas which the DTI may require TESDA's assistance.

SECTION 22. *Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).* – Partner HEIs will help in the administration of the Program in their respective schools. Technical skills and competency-based training courses and programs offered and implemented in HEIs must be in line with the standards of quality and accreditation systems recognized by the CHED and TESDA. The same will be aligned with the Standardized Qualifications to be established by the NSFC.

CHAPTER VI FINAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 23. *Appropriations.* – The Secretary of Trade and Industry shall immediately include in the DTI's budget the amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act. An initial appropriation of Twenty-Seven Billion Pesos (PHP 27,000,000,000.00) for the first year of implementation is hereby appropriated. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continuous implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 24. *Review and Monitoring.* – The National Future Skills Council shall report to the President and Congress after the first three (3) years, and every two (2) years thereafter, on the implementation of the provisions of this Act and shall submit recommendations for its improvement. All the NFSC government agencies are also tasked to monitor the implementation of this Program as well as the Labor Market Intelligence Survey and Analysis Report. The NFSC shall establish a monitoring and evaluation framework in the Implementing Rules and Regulations.

SECTION 25. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the NFSC, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

The IRR issued pursuant to this section shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation

SECTION 26. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is

declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 27. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 28. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,