

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4776



Introduced by REP. REX GATCHALIAN

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE TRANSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT TO
E-GOVERNANCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Time and again, the media has highlighted one of the most infamous symbols of government service in the Philippines, long lines. Traditionally, virtually any form of government service – whether to obtain documents, submit application for permit, or attend an appointment – would require Filipinos to wait in stretching queues. Despite innovations in technology, the public sector has been left behind in terms of transitioning to digital platforms to render their duties and obligations.

The COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated the existing problems in the delivery of government services in the country. Due to the pressing need to practice social or physical distancing, government agencies, financial institutions, and other public offices have been forced to operate at a limited capacity on the ground, if not shut down entirely. Since people cannot physically queue in government offices for services and most government personnel cannot physically report to work, the flow of government services has been unprecedentedly impaired.

The shift to digital platforms has been a long time coming. The pandemic only expedited the need for its execution. The policies in the “new normal” must be responsive to the needs of the populace and allow them to truly feel a sense of normalcy, rather than burden them with inevitable but avoidable restrictions. Digitalization of services is evidently the most efficient solution to gap the delivery of

government services. It is high time to enact a law that will require all government agencies to transition to digital platforms.

This bill seeks to recognize the vital role of communication and information in nation-building and the necessity of harnessing the power of information and communications technology in pursuit of national development and progress. This bill further seeks to establish an integrated, interconnected, and interoperable information and resource sharing communications network spanning the entirety of the national and local government, an internal records management information system, an information database, and digital portals for the delivery of public services. It likewise pushes for the digitization of paper-based and other traditional modes of workflows for a more efficient and transparent public service. Moreover, this bill encourages government cooperation with the private sector in providing resources, assets, and services.

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



HON. REX GATCHALIAN
Representative
1st District, Valenzuela City

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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 “E-Governance Act.”

2
3 **SEC. 2.** *Declaration of Policy and Purposes.* – It is hereby declared the policy
4 of the State to recognize the vital role of communication and information in nation-
5 building and the necessity of harnessing the power of information and
6 communications technology in pursuit of national development and progress. The
7 State hereby adopts a policy to create, foster, and sustain a digitally empowered and
8 integrated government that provides responsive and transparent online citizen-
9 centered services for a globally competitive Filipino nation.

10
11 In pursuit of this policy, this Act shall have the following purposes:

- 12
13 (A) Provide effective leadership of government efforts to develop and
14 promote electronic government services and processes by providing
15 guidance to the Department of Information and Communications
16 Technology (DICT) in accordance with its mandate;
17
18 (B) Promote the use of the Internet, Intranet, and other information and
19 communications technologies to provide increased opportunities for
20 citizen participation in government;
21

- 1 (C) Promote inter-agency collaboration in providing electronic government
2 services, where this collaboration would improve the service to citizens
3 by integrating related functions, and in the use of internal electronic
4 government processes, where this collaboration would improve the
5 efficiency and effectiveness of the processes;
6
7 (D) Improve the ability of the government to achieve agency missions and
8 program performance goals;
9
10 (E) Promote the use of the Internet, Intranet, and emerging technologies
11 within and across government agencies to provide citizen-centric
12 government information and services;
13
14 (F) Reduce costs and burdens for businesses and other government
15 entities;
16
17 (G) Promote better informed and data-driven decision making by policy
18 makers, taking into consideration data analytics results;
19
20 (H) Promote access to high quality government information and services
21 across multiple channels;
22
23 (I) Make the national and local governments transparent and accountable;
24
25 (J) Transform agency operations by utilizing, where appropriate, best
26 practices from public and private sector organizations, both local and
27 international; and
28
29 (K) Provide enhanced and secured access to government information and
30 services in a manner consistent with laws regarding protection of data
31 privacy, national security, records retention, access for persons with
32 disabilities, and other relevant laws.
33

34 **SEC. 3. Coverage.** - This Act shall apply to all government offices and
35 agencies including local government units and government-owned or -controlled
36 corporations.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

- (A) *Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)* refers to functions that allow connection or interaction between applications, programs, software components, systems, hardware, and micro-services of different persons or organizations, which may be utilized to enable efficient and widespread delivery of government services.
- (B) *E-Governance* refers to use of information and communications technology by the government and the public to enhance the access to and delivery of government services to bring about efficient, responsive, ethical, accountable and transparent government service.
- (C) *ICT Assets* refer to any data, device, equipment, infrastructure, system, or component thereof, or property, owned or possessed by the DICT in accordance with its mandate, utilized to ensure or support the proper and efficient operation and implementation of ICT-related programs and delivery of ICT services.
- (D) *ICT Plan* refers to the sum or set of goals, measures, strategies, agenda, and programs for the implementation of ICT programs and projects and the use of information and communications technology, including digital platforms, to deliver public services or otherwise perform governmental functions.
- (E) *Information Security Standards (ISS)* refers to generally acceptable security standards which aim to protect and secure the confidentiality, integrity, availability, authenticity, and non-repudiation of information.
- (F) *Internet* refers to a public enterprise network that shares data or application resources via Internet Protocol (IP).
- (G) *Intranet* refers to a private enterprise network that shares data or application resources via IP.

- 1 (H) *Workflow* refers to the sequence of industrial, administrative, or other
2 processes through which a piece of work passes from initiation to
3 completion.

4
5 **CHAPTER 1**
6 **ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT**
7

8 **SEC. 5.** *Responsibilities of the Heads of Government Agencies.* – The head of
9 each agency, office, and instrumentality of the national and local government shall
10 be responsible for:

- 11
12 (A) Complying with the requirements of this Act, including related
13 standards for all ICT infrastructure, systems, equipment, designs, and
14 all other technology, which shall be promulgated by the DICT;
15
16 (B) Complying with the standards and protocols for cybersecurity,
17 resiliency, privacy, and confidentiality, which shall also be promulgated
18 by the DICT;
19
20 (C) Ensuring that the information technology standards promulgated by
21 the DICT are communicated promptly and effectively to all relevant
22 officials within their agency;
23
24 (D) Supporting the efforts of the national and local government to develop,
25 maintain, and promote an integrated Internet-based system of
26 delivering government information and services to the public; and
27
28 (E) In consultation with the DICT, establishing and implementing the
29 information security policy and standards within their organization, in
30 consideration of their respective technology needs and risks.

31
32 To these ends:

- 33
34 (A) Agencies shall develop performance measures that demonstrate how
35 electronic government enables progress toward agency objectives,
36 strategic goals, and statutory mandates;

- 1
- 2 (B) Agencies shall, in measuring performance, rely on existing data
- 3 collections to the extent practicable. Areas of performance
- 4 measurement that agencies should include customer service; agency
- 5 productivity; and adoption of innovative information technology,
- 6 including the appropriate use of commercial best practices;
- 7
- 8 (C) Agencies shall link their performance goals, as appropriate, to key
- 9 groups, including citizens, businesses, and other governments;
- 10
- 11 (D) Agencies shall, as appropriate, work collectively in linking their
- 12 performance goals to key groups and shall use information technology
- 13 in delivering government information and services to those groups; and
- 14
- 15 (E) Agencies shall ensure that all information systems strategic plan
- 16 (ISSPs) and information and communications technology (ICT) plans
- 17 are updated annually and considered in their budget preparation
- 18 activities.
- 19

20 **SEC. 6.** *Role of the Department of Information and Communications*

21 *Technology* – The DICT shall, in addition to its mandates and functions:

22

- 23 (F) Harmonize and coordinate all national ICT plans and initiatives to
- 24 ensure knowledge, information and resource-sharing, database-
- 25 building, and agency networking linkages among government agencies,
- 26 consistent with E-Government objectives in particular, and national
- 27 objectives in general;
- 28
- 29 (G) Ensure the development and protection of integrated government ICT
- 30 infrastructures and designs, taking into consideration the inventory of
- 31 existing manpower, plans, programs, software, hardware, and installed
- 32 systems;
- 33
- 34 (H) Assist and provide technical expertise to government agencies in the
- 35 development of guidelines in the enforcement and administration of
- 36 laws, standards, rules, and regulations governing ICT;

1
2 (I) Assess, initiate, review and support ICT research and development
3 programs of the government; and
4

5 (J) Prescribe, in accordance with applicable civil service laws and rules,
6 the creation of data protection and other ICT-related government
7 positions and the corresponding compensation rates aligned with the
8 personnel needs of a digitalized government, as well as the
9 qualifications, standards, duties, and functions essential to the
10 effective development and operation of government ICT infrastructures
11 and systems.
12

13 **SEC. 7. DICT as the Primary Implementing Body.** – The DICT shall be the
14 primary implementing body and principal administrator of this Act. All ICT projects
15 in the Philippines shall be done in accordance with the National ICT Development
16 Agenda. For this purpose, the DICT shall establish measures to implement policies
17 under this Act and ensure that all ICT projects in the Philippines, whether national
18 or local are harmonized with the overall ICT plans and in compliance with applicable
19 standards. Accordingly, the DICT shall:
20

21 (A) Adopt a national policy and process that would facilitate the entry and
22 adoption of technologies consistent with the goals of this Act;
23

24 (B) Support and supervise the government agencies in ensuring the
25 quality, security, reliability, and interoperability of their respective ICT
26 infrastructure and services in accordance with international or
27 industrial standards, specifications, and best practices;
28

29 (C) Tap the private sector and enter into partnerships and joint ventures
30 in accordance with the goals of this Act;
31

32 (D) Mandate and supervise the adoption of policies and processes to ensure
33 the implementation of this Act;
34

1 (E) Mandate and supervise the interconnection or interoperability of ICT
2 infrastructure, systems, and facilities when necessary to achieve the
3 goals of this Act; and
4

5 (F) Regulate and supervise the operations of ICT infrastructure, systems,
6 and facilities, and in the exercise of such functions, in accordance with
7 applicable laws and rules, charge reasonable administrative and
8 operational fees as may be necessary.
9

10 **SEC. 8.** *The DICT-Project Management Office.* – Within one year from the
11 effectivity of this Act, the DICT shall establish a government-wide Project
12 Management Office (PMO), which shall cater to and address to the portfolio, program,
13 and project management needs of government agencies, with the end goal of ensuring
14 that ICT projects across the government are managed with efficiency and agility
15 following international best practices and standards, to deliver successful projects,
16 with the goal of delivering lasting benefits and value through new or enhanced ICT
17 services.
18

19 The DICT shall provide guidelines on the operation of the PMO and as to the
20 qualifications of personnel under the PMO, who shall, at the minimum obtain
21 internationally-recognized certifications and a required number of units on Project
22 Management, Program Management, IT Service Management ITIL, The Open Group
23 Enterprise Architecture, Risk Management, and other similar fields or
24 specializations. For this purpose, the ICT Academy created under this Act shall
25 ensure that courses, multimodal training, and certifications to develop this human
26 resource are regularly offered.
27

28 **SEC. 9.** *Chief Information Officer.* – The appointed Chief Information Officer
29 (CIO) in every government agency is mandated to ensure that ICT systems are
30 properly secured and compliant with standards imposed by relevant laws, rules and
31 regulations, including, among others, the Data Privacy Act and other policies issued
32 by the DICT.
33

34 **SEC. 10.** *Inclusivity.* – In accordance with the provisions of this Act on the
35 Philippine Citizen Connect Program, when promulgating policies and implementing
36 programs regarding the provision of government information and services over the

1 internet and other platforms or channels, agency heads shall consider the impact on
2 persons without access to such platforms or channels, and shall, to the extent
3 practicable, ensure that the availability of government information and services has
4 not been or will not be diminished for individuals and entities who lack access to the
5 internet; and pursue alternate modes of delivery that make government information
6 and services more accessible to individuals who do not own computers or lack access
7 to the internet or other platforms and channels.

8 9 **CHAPTER 2** 10 **THE INTEGRATED GOVERNMENT NETWORK** 11

12 **SEC. 11.** *Establishment of the Integrated Government Network.* – The DICT
13 shall establish an integrated, interconnected, and interoperable internal government
14 network, to be known as the “Integrated Government Network” (IGN), which shall act
15 as the primary means for the sharing and communication of resources, information,
16 and data through and on digital and electronic platforms across all of the
17 government. The DICT, subject to relevant laws, rules and regulations, may use
18 either or both public and private funds in the construction and establishment of IGN
19 as it may deem financially prudent. The IGN shall also act as the government’s
20 primary and focal information management tool and communications network.
21

22 **SEC. 12.** *Scope and Coverage of the IGN.* – The IGN shall cover all branches,
23 agencies, instrumentalities, and offices of the national and local government,
24 including government-owned and controlled corporations.
25

26 **SEC. 13.** *Interconnectivity and Interoperability of the IGN to Existing*
27 *Government Networks.* – All internal networks already established and maintained
28 by any government agency, office, or instrumentality, including local governments,
29 shall upon the effectivity of this Act, enact measures to establish interconnection to
30 and interoperability with the IGN.
31

32 **SEC. 14.** *Internal Records Management Information System.* – The government
33 shall establish, maintain, and support a records management system for the
34 systematic, efficient, and cost-effective management of all government and public
35 documents and records. All paper-based documents and records shall be digitized,
36 migrated to, and managed through this system.

1
2 Further, the government shall establish a framework to allow efficient
3 interoperability among agencies, offices, and instrumentalities of the national and
4 local government when using electronic signatures, including processing of digital
5 signatures.

6
7 **SEC. 15. *Internal Email Network.*** - The government shall establish and
8 maintain an internal email and communications network, to be known as "GovMail,"
9 for internal and intra-government communications, information dissemination and
10 sharing, coordination, feedback, and other similar and related purposes. It shall be
11 structured in a manner that ensures that the use and operation of such email
12 network shall be accessible, safe, interactive, interconnected, and interoperable.
13 GovMail may be established using public or private funds, as the government may
14 deem financially prudent and subject to relevant laws, rules, and regulations.

15
16 **SEC. 16. *Migration, Digitization, and Automation of Paper-Based Workflows.*** -
17 All paper-based government and bureaucratic workflows involving internal
18 communications, information dissemination and sharing, coordination, feedback,
19 and other similar and related purposes shall be migrated, digitized, and, as far as
20 practicable, automated.

21
22 Notwithstanding the provisions of this Act, communication, information
23 dissemination and sharing, coordination, and feedback which deals with critical and
24 sensitive information as may be determined by the head of the agency shall be
25 allowed to be conducted through traditional and non-digital means as may be
26 deemed appropriate for the purpose by the head of the agency.

27
28 Respective government agencies and units shall take the lead and be
29 responsible for the implementation of this section, with the support and supervision
30 of the DICT. To enhance interagency and government interoperability, all information
31 systems developed by the government must support secure and interoperable
32 Application Programming Interface (API) Capabilities.

33
34 **CHAPTER 3**
35 **THE PHILIPPINE INFORMATION DATABASES**
36

1 **SEC. 17.** *The Philippine Individual Information Database and Civil Registration*
2 *System.* – The government shall strengthen the existing databases. It shall establish,
3 maintain, and support an individual information database which shall act as a
4 national repository and directory of information and data on citizens of the
5 Philippines, whether residing in the Philippines or not, and foreign nationals who
6 enters the Philippines through legal channels.

7
8 Information and data to be stored on these databases including names,
9 addresses, whether permanent or temporary, national identification numbers, dates
10 and places of birth, citizenship, civil status, biometric data and information, and
11 other associated information shall be secured with reasonable and appropriate
12 safeguards for data protection and information security: *Provided*, That the
13 acquisition and storage of data and information on the database shall not in any way
14 violate any applicable domestic and international laws and rules on privacy of data
15 and information.

16
17 **SEC. 18.** *Access to and Use of the Database.* – The databases shall be
18 accessible, through secure digital platforms to all appropriate agencies, offices, and
19 instrumentalities of the government for purposes consistent with legitimate and valid
20 public purposes, subject to the provisions of the Data Privacy Act (Republic Act
21 10173): *Provided*, That access and use of the information in the databases shall be
22 limited to the performance of a public function or the provision of a public service
23 pursuant to the agencies' respective mandates. *Provided further*, That the individual
24 whose personal data will be accessed has been notified and has provided prior
25 consent or authorization in relation to the transaction with the pertinent government
26 agency requiring access and use to personal data contained in a separate database.

27
28 All government agencies, offices, and instrumentalities with access to the
29 database shall maintain a record of all the instances when, where, and how such
30 agency, office, or instrumentality, or its duly authorized representatives, had
31 accessed any information or data stored on the database and the purposes of such
32 access, including the identity of the actual person or persons gaining access to the
33 said database.

34
35 Notwithstanding the provisions of this Act, access to and use of the resources,
36 information, and data on the database shall be in accordance with all relevant

1 domestic and international laws, rules, and regulations on data and information
2 privacy and the pertinent rules on confidentiality of government information.
3

4 **SEC. 19.** *Integration with the Philippine Identification System.* – The Philippine
5 Identification System generated tokens, including any existing and planned
6 mechanisms for tokenization or other privacy preserving mechanisms shall be fully
7 integrated with the database, in accordance with existing laws, rules, and
8 regulations.
9

10 **SEC. 20.** *Automatic and Real-Time Updating of Information.* – The government
11 shall establish and maintain measures to ensure that information stored on the
12 database shall automatically and in real time be updated across the entire
13 government network, regardless of when and where the change in such data or
14 information was first made or submitted, with the end view that an update made at
15 any access point in the government network shall automatically be reflected and
16 accessible across all access points in real time: *Provided*, That the individual whose
17 information is updated in real-time shall be notified and informed of the details of
18 the update in real-time: *Provided further*, That should there be an error in the update,
19 simple and convenient mechanisms should be available to the individual to submit
20 a request for correction which shall be acted upon without undue delay: *Provided*
21 *finally*, That should an erroneous update be done with malice, bad faith, or intent to
22 cause any harm to the individual whose information was updated, the person
23 causing such erroneous update shall be subject to criminal liability in accordance
24 with the provisions of the applicable and relevant penal laws.
25

26 **SEC. 21.** *Single Source of Truth.* – In order to have access to the most updated
27 data, the government shall establish and maintain measures to ensure that the
28 parent government agency responsible for a set of data shall own, maintain, and
29 protect the data while giving access via APIs to other agencies.
30

31 **SEC. 22.** *Creation of Data Exchange Protocols.* — The DICT shall establish a
32 data exchange protocol between and among agencies and private sector which shall
33 ensure legitimacy of access to data, security of information, and compliance with
34 applicable domestic and international laws on data privacy.
35

36 CHAPTER 4

THE PUBLIC SERVICE DIRECTORY

SEC. 23. *The Public Service Directory.* – The government shall establish, maintain, and support a directory, to be known as the “Philippine Public Service Directory,” of all civil and public officials and servants throughout the country, including names, titles, telephone and facsimile numbers, departmental names, office locations, and e-mail addresses. Any changes to the information stored on and accessed through the directory shall be reflected in real time.

The directory shall also have a separate database aspect that houses public sector API details such as endpoints, information on getting, credentials maintainers, and others. The database shall also be adaptive to show only the available APIs depending on the defined access rights. Public APIs such as Metro Manila Development Authority traffic update, Ninoy Aquino International Airport flight schedules, LGU garbage collection schedule and the likes can be seen by all users including unauthenticated users. Others are visible to only those with appropriate permissions.

SEC. 24. *Access to and Use of the Directory.* – The directory shall be accessible, through digital platforms such as intranet and internet, to all citizens of the Philippines and foreign nationals who have entered the Philippines through legitimate channels for legitimate and valid purposes consistent with civil service rules and the right of the public to information.

Notwithstanding the provisions of this Act, access to and use of the resources, information, and data on the directory shall be in accordance with all relevant laws, rules, and regulations on data and information privacy and the pertinent rules on confidentiality of government information

CHAPTER 5 THE GOVERNMENT E-PORTALS

SEC. 25. *Establishment of Online Public Service Portal for Individuals and Business.* – In accordance with the policy of the government to maintain and promote an integrated internet-based system of providing the public with access to government information and services, the government, through the DICT, shall

1 establish, maintain, and continuously update a portal which shall serve as a
2 helpdesk where citizens can request for information and assistance on government
3 frontline services, service procedures, and report commendations, appreciation,
4 complaints, and feedback.

5
6 The online portal shall also serve as centralized contact point where all
7 communications from the public through such portal may be routed, logged,
8 responded to, and ultimately distributed to the different government agencies for
9 proper handling and resolution, and follow through if necessary.

10
11 **SEC. 26.** *Access to and Use of the Online Public Service Portal.* – The portal
12 shall be accessible, through digital platforms such as the intranet and internet, to
13 citizens of the Philippines, foreign nationals who have entered the Philippines
14 through legitimate channels, and businesses organized and existing or operating
15 under the laws and rules of the Philippines for purposes consistent with the efficient
16 delivery of public services.

17
18 Notwithstanding the provisions of this Act, access to and use of the resources,
19 information, and data through the portal shall be in accordance with all relevant
20 laws, rules, and regulations on data and information privacy and the pertinent rules
21 on confidentiality of government information.

22
23 **SEC. 27.** *Government Frontline Services Through the Portal.* – All government
24 agencies, offices, and instrumentalities which provide frontline services, as defined
25 under Republic Act No. 9485 or the “Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007”, as amended, shall
26 establish and maintain measures to ensure that such services are accessible and
27 capable of delivery to the public through the portal.

28
29 All offices and agencies which provide frontline services are hereby mandated
30 to regularly undertake time and motion studies, undergo evaluation and
31 improvement of their transaction systems and procedures and re-engineer the same
32 if deemed necessary to maximize the use of the portal for efficiency and transparency.

33
34 **SEC. 28.** *Access to Frontline Services.* – The following shall be adopted by all
35 government offices and agencies covered in the immediately preceding paragraph:
36

1 (A) *Acceptance of applications and request.* – All officers or employees shall
2 accept written applications, requests, and/or documents being
3 submitted by clients of the office or agencies through the portal.
4

5 The responsible officer or employee shall acknowledge receipt of such
6 application and/or request by writing or printing clearly thereon,
7 through the portal, his/her name, the unit where he/she is connected
8 with, and the time and date of receipt.
9

10 The receiving officer or employee shall perform a preliminary
11 assessment of the request so as to promote a more expeditious action
12 on requests.
13

14 (B) *Action of offices.* – All applications and/or requests submitted through
15 the portal shall be acted upon by the assigned officer or employee
16 during the period stated in the Citizen's Charter which shall not be
17 longer than five working days in the case of simple transactions and
18 ten (10) working days in the case of complex transactions from the date
19 the request or application was received. Depending on the nature of the
20 frontline services requested or the mandate of the office or agency
21 under unusual circumstances, the maximum time prescribed above
22 may be extended. For the extension due to nature of frontline services
23 or the mandate of the office or agency concerned the period for the
24 delivery of frontline services shall be indicated in the Citizen's Charter.
25 The office or agency concerned shall notify the requesting party in
26 writing of the reason for the extension and the final date of release for
27 the extension and the final date of release of the frontline service/s
28 requested.
29

30 No application or request shall be returned to the client without
31 appropriate action. In case an application or request is disapproved,
32 the officer or employee who rendered the decision shall send a formal
33 notice to the client within five working days from the receipt of the
34 request and/or application, stating therein the reason for the
35 disapproval including a list of specific requirement/s which the client
36 failed to submit.

- 1
- 2 (C) *Denial of request for access to government service.* – Any denial of
- 3 request for access to government service shall be fully explained in
- 4 writing and through the portal, stating the name of the person making
- 5 the denial and the grounds upon which such denial is based. Any
- 6 denial of request is deemed to have been made with the permission or
- 7 clearance from the highest authority having jurisdiction over the
- 8 government office or agency concerned.
- 9
- 10 (D) *Access to progression of frontline service requests through the online*
- 11 *portal.* – All offices, agencies, and instrumentalities shall make
- 12 accessible through the portal the progress of all frontline service
- 13 requests in real time.
- 14
- 15 (E) *Adoption of working schedules to serve clients through the online portal.*
- 16 – Heads of offices and agencies which render frontline services shall
- 17 adopt appropriate working schedules to ensure that all clients have
- 18 requested for public services through the portal are attended to and
- 19 served even during lunch break and after regular working hours, in
- 20 accordance with pertinent civil service rules.
- 21
- 22 (F) *Identification of public employees.* – All employees transacting with the
- 23 public shall be with an official identification card which should be
- 24 publicly accessible through the online portal.
- 25

26 Government agencies, offices, and instrumentalities mandated under this Act

27 to provide and deliver public services through the portal shall not in any way require

28 the person requesting for such public service to physically go and report to the

29 physical office of such agency, office, or instrumentality where the purpose of such

30 physical presence may be reasonably accomplished through the online portal.

31

32 **SEC. 29.** *The Government Online Payment System.* – In conjunction with the

33 online portals for the delivery of public services, the government shall establish an

34 internet-based electronic payment system and facility to enable citizens and

35 businesses to remit payments through digital platforms to the government agencies

36 to which such payments are due. For this purpose, the government, in accordance

1 with applicable laws and rules, may engage the services of and interconnect with
2 public and private payment systems and facilities, including the National Retail
3 Payment System of the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*, among others.

4
5 **SEC. 30.** *The Citizens' Concerns Center.* – There is hereby established a
6 Citizens' Concerns Center, which shall serve as a mechanism where citizens may
7 report their complaints, grievances, and concerns on acts of red tape, as defined
8 under Republic Act No. 9485 and other relevant laws, and corruption or misconduct
9 on the part of any government agency, government-owned or controlled corporation,
10 government financial institution, and other instrumentalities of the government or
11 any of its officers, officials, or employees.

12
13 The Center shall be under the direction and supervision of the Office of the
14 Cabinet Secretary, in coordination with the DILG and representatives from the local
15 government units.

16
17 **SEC. 31.** *Integration with Existing Public Feedback Mechanisms.* – All existing
18 public feedback mechanisms for similar purposes established and/or maintained by
19 agencies, offices, and instrumentalities, and local government units, shall be fully
20 integrated with the Center. For this purpose and in accordance with the objectives
21 of this Act, the Center may enter into such arrangements as are necessary for the
22 interconnection, interoperability, and integration of the public feedback
23 mechanisms.

24
25 **SEC. 32.** *Integration with the Internal Government Network and Database.* –
26 The Center, including its sub-operations units, and its operations shall be fully
27 integrated with the internal government network and database for real time updating
28 of data and information.

29
30 **SEC. 33.** *Minimum Operating Standards.* – The Center, including its sub-
31 operational units, shall have the following minimum operating standards:

32
33 (A) *Communications channels.* – The Center shall provide communications
34 channels which include but are not limited to the following:

35
36 (i) Telephone;

- (ii) Short message service (SMS) or text message service;
- (iii) Electronic mail (email);
- (iv) Social media; or
- (v) Other emerging communications media which can reasonably be used to fulfill the purposes of the Center.

(B) *Operating hours.* – The Center shall operate, through any of its communications channels, twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week, including national holidays and days in which work is suspended for whatever reason, for which purpose the Center may establish effective measures and hire the necessary personnel;

(C) *Process flow.* – A citizen's concern received through any of the communications channels shall immediately be encoded onto the Philippine Information Database and referred, directly or indirectly, in real time, to the concerned agency, office, or instrumentality for appropriate action through the internal government network. The complainant shall be given advice or feedback on the status of the concern until its resolution;

(D) *Period to take action.* – A citizen's concern lodged and received through any of the communication channels shall have a concrete and specific action within seventy-two (72) hours from receipt by the proper government agency or instrumentality. For purposes of this provision, the period provided shall exclude such time outside the normal office hours of the agency or office concerned.

SEC. 34. Cooperation of Government Agencies and Local Government Units. – To ensure that the public is served efficiently and expeditiously in accordance with the objectives of this Act, all national government agencies, offices, and instrumentalities, government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), government financial institutions, as well as the local government units, are enjoined to cooperate and coordinate with the Office of the Cabinet Secretary and each other to ensure prompt action on the concerns received through the communications channels of the Center.

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CHAPTER 6

THE PHILIPPINE CITIZEN CONNECT PROGRAM

SEC. 35. *The Philippine Citizen Connect Program.* – The government shall establish a program, to be known as the “Philippine Citizen Connect,” to assist and help the public to who does not have access to, or need help with using computers, the internet, and other analogous means to transact with and request the delivery of public services from the government in their localities.

SEC. 36. *Free Access to the Internet for the Public.* – Pursuant to Republic Act No. 10929 or the “Free Internet Access in Public Places Act,” the government, through the DICT, shall establish a program that will provide free access to internet service in public places, with particular focus on unserved or underserved areas, throughout the country, to enable access to the online portals, promote knowledge-building among citizens, and enable them to participate and compete in the evolving information and communication age.

SEC. 37. *Provision and Maintenance of Internet-Capable Devices in All Barangay Centers.* – All barangay centers in the country shall provide and maintain internet-capable devices such as but not limited to computers and tablets for the purpose of enabling efficient and timely access to government services.

SEC. 38. *Staffing Requirement for Internet Access.* – All barangay centers shall ensure that there will be government staff present to help the public access the government portal and perform online transactions with government agencies, offices, and instrumentalities.

CHAPTER 7

THE GOVERNMENT WEBSITES AND E-BULLETIN BOARDS

SEC. 39. *The Government E-Bulletin Board.* – The government and all its agencies, offices, and instrumentalities, including local governments, shall each establish and maintain a website and an e-bulletin board for the purposes of information sharing and dissemination, which shall be structured and maintained to ensure accessibility and security.

1 **SEC. 40.** *Information Dissemination Through the Website and Board.* – All
2 government offices, agencies, and instrumentalities which are mandated by the laws
3 or rules to publish or otherwise disseminate notices, documents, or other
4 information intended for public consumption and information shall, in addition to
5 the traditional modes therefor, publish such notices, documents, or other
6 information on the website and e-bulletin board.

7
8 Notwithstanding the provisions of this Act and other relevant laws, publication
9 of notices, documents, or any other information on the website and e-bulletin board
10 shall be construed as sufficient notice to the public for purposes of compliance with
11 laws and rules requiring publication; *provided*, that such website or e-bulletin board
12 is accessible at such point in time where accessibility is claimed. For purposes of
13 this provision, the start of publication shall be the date on which the notice,
14 document, or information was first uploaded and made accessible to the public.

15
16 **SEC. 41.** *Minimum Standards for Government Websites and Information*
17 *Portals.* – The following shall be the minimum standards for government websites
18 and information portals:

- 19
20 (A) It shall include direct and easily identifiable links to (i) description of
21 the mission, statutory authority, and the organizational structure of
22 the agency; and (ii) commonly asked questions and the corresponding
23 answers, and other common matters of public concern;
24
25 (B) It shall include direct and easily identifiable links to the relevant and
26 applicable portals for the delivery of public services; and
27
28 (C) It shall include the ability to provide public access to this information
29 via an API.

30
31 **CHAPTER 8**
32 **SECURITY AND PRIVACY**
33

34 **SEC. 42.** *Data and Information Security.* – All resources, information, or data
35 stored on or transmitted through the government information systems and all
36 networks interconnected to and interoperable with it, the Philippine Information

1 Database, the Public Service Directory, the portals, and websites shall be kept secure
2 and free from interference or unauthorized access that can hamper or otherwise
3 compromise the integrity and availability of the information and communication
4 technology assets.

5
6 Access to and use of the resources, information, and data on the government
7 information systems shall be limited to the government and its duly authorized
8 officers and agents, in accordance with all relevant laws, rules, and regulations on
9 data and information privacy and the pertinent rules on confidentiality of government
10 information.

11
12 Any person who shall knowingly commit an act which results to the
13 compromise of the security and integrity of the government information systems and
14 all networks interconnected to and interoperable with it to the detriment of the
15 government and the public shall incur criminal liability in accordance with the
16 provisions of applicable and/or relevant penal laws.

17
18 **SEC. 43. Responsibility of the National and Local Government.** – All agencies,
19 offices, and instrumentalities of the national and local government under this Act
20 shall be responsible for:

- 21
22 (A) Providing information security protections commensurate with the risk
23 and magnitude of the harm resulting from unauthorized access, use,
24 disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction of information
25 collected or maintained by or on behalf of the agency; and information
26 systems used or operated by an agency or by a contractor of an agency
27 or other organization on behalf of an agency;
28
29 (B) Determining the levels of information security appropriate to protect
30 such information and information systems and implementing the same;
31
32 (C) Periodically testing and evaluating information security controls and
33 techniques to ensure that they are effectively implemented;
34
35 (D) Complying with the requirements of pertinent laws on information
36 security and privacy, related policies, procedures, standards, and

1 guidelines, including information security standards promulgated by
2 the DICT; and information security standards and guidelines for
3 national security systems issued in accordance with law and as
4 directed by the President; and
5

- 6 (E) Ensuring that information security management processes are
7 integrated with agency strategic and operational planning processes.
8

9 CHAPTER 9

10 PARTICIPATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

11
12 **SEC. 44.** *Government Cooperation with the Private Sector.* – Nothing in this
13 Act shall prevent the government, both national and local, from entering into
14 contracts, agreements, or partnerships with the private sector to provide various
15 resources, assets, and services in order to comply or enhance compliance with the
16 provisions of this Act.
17

18 Any and all contracts or agreements with the private sector in the context of
19 this Act shall be subject to the laws and rules on public accountability and
20 transparency and good governance.
21

22 CHAPTER 10

23 THE PHILIPPINE INFOSTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

24
25 **SEC. 45.** *The Philippine Infostructure Management Corporation.* – For the
26 purpose of ensuring proper and efficient operations and management of the ICT
27 assets of the DICT, and a faster implementation of infrastructure programs related
28 to connectivity, data center and cloud infrastructure, there is hereby established a
29 body corporate to be known as Philippine Infostructure Management Corporation
30 (PIMC), which shall be an attached agency to the DICT. The legal existence of the
31 PIMC shall be for a period of 50 years from the date of the approval of this Act. The
32 PIMC shall be subject to the rules and regulations as the DICT may impose from time
33 to time.
34

35 **SEC. 46.** *Powers and Functions.* – To carry out its main purpose and in
36 accordance with applicable laws and rules and in addition to the powers granted to

1 a corporation under the general corporation code, the PIMC shall have the following
2 functions and powers:

- 3
- 4 (A) Plan and implement infrastructure programs such as but not limited
5 to the National Broadband Plan, Free WiFi for All, and expansion of the
6 National Government Data Centers and Government Cloud;
- 7
- 8 (B) Manage ICT assets of the DICT;
- 9
- 10 (C) Prescribe, repeal, and alter its own by-laws;
- 11
- 12 (D) Determine its operating policies, and to issue such rules and
13 regulations as may be necessary to achieve its main purpose;
- 14
- 15 (E) Adopt, alter and use a corporate seal;
- 16
- 17 (F) Acquire and own real and personal property, and to sell, mortgage or
18 otherwise dispose of the same;
- 19
- 20 (G) Sue and be sued, enter into contracts, and borrow money from both
21 local and foreign sources; provided, that such loans shall be incurred
22 only upon favorable recommendation of the DICT and approval by the
23 President of the Philippines;
- 24
- 25 (H) Hold, own, purchase, acquire, sell or otherwise invest, or reinvest in
26 stocks, bonds or other securities capable of giving the PIMC a
27 reasonably assured income sufficient to support its activities; and
- 28
- 29 (I) Provide ICT counseling and technical services to government and
30 private entities; provided, that for this purpose, the PIMC may contract
31 the services of private consultants.
- 32

33 **SEC. 47. Board of Trustees.** — The corporate powers and functions of the
34 PIMC shall be vested in and exercised by a Board of Trustees that shall be composed
35 of the following:

36

- 1 (A) The Secretary of the DICT, as Ex-Officio Chairperson and Chief
2 Executive Officer;
- 3
- 4 (B) The Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management, or his
5 duly designated as Ex-Officio Executive Vice Chairperson; and
6
- 7 (C) As Ex-Officio Members:
- 8
- 9 (i) The Commissioner of the National Telecommunications
10 Commission, or a duly designated Deputy Commissioner;
- 11
- 12 (ii) The Commissioner of the National Privacy Commission or a duly
13 designated Deputy Privacy Commissioner;
- 14
- 15 (iii) One (1) representative from the information technology and
16 business process outsourcing industry;
- 17
- 18 (iv) One (1) representative from the telecommunications industry;
19 and
- 20
- 21 (v) One (1) representative from the local government units.
22

23 The representatives from the private sector and the local government units
24 shall be appointed by the President. The representatives from the private sector shall
25 be appointed only upon a favorable recommendation from the DICT and the
26 Government Commission on GOCCs. The representatives from the private sector
27 shall be persons of accepted integrity, probity, and intellect, at least thirty-five (35)
28 years of age, possessed of demonstrated administrative skills and ability in the field
29 of ICT, and with a minimum of ten (10) years of professional experience in the field
30 of ICT. The representative from the local government units shall be appointed only
31 upon a favorable recommendation from the DICT, and the DILG.
32

33 The Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation shall execute and administer
34 the policies and resolutions approved by the Board of Trustees, prepare its agenda,
35 and direct and supervise the operations and management of the Corporation. He
36 shall have direct control and supervision of the business of the PIMC in all matters
37 which are not by this Act or by the by-laws specifically reserved to be done by the

1 Board of Trustees. He shall, subject to the approval of the Board in case of approval
2 of appointments to managerial positions and above, and the confirmation of the
3 Board in appointments to below that of manager level, appoint the personnel of the
4 Corporation, remove, suspend or otherwise discipline them for cause, and prescribe
5 their duties and qualifications, in accordance with existing civil service laws, rules
6 and regulations, to the end that only competent and qualified personnel may be
7 employed.

8
9 All members of the Board shall serve for a term of seven years.

10
11 The Chairperson and the members of the Board shall act as the heads of such
12 operating departments as may be set up by the Board. The Chairperson shall have
13 authority, exercisable at his discretion, to determine from time to time the
14 organizational divisions to be headed by each member serving full time and to make
15 the corresponding shifts in designations pursuant thereto. The compensation of the
16 Chairperson and the members of the Board of Trustees shall be in accordance with
17 applicable laws and rules on compensation in the civil service.

18
19 The Chairperson of the Board shall be assisted by an Executive Vice-
20 Chairperson and one or more Vice-Chairperson who shall be chosen and may be
21 removed by the Board of Trustees. The salaries of the Vice-Chairpersons shall be fixed
22 by the Board of Trustees with the approval of the President of the Philippines.

23
24 **SEC. 48. Authorized Capital Stock.** - The PIMC shall have an authorized
25 capital stock of Five billion Philippine pesos (PHP 5,000,000,000.00), divided into five
26 million (5,000,000) shares of common stock with a par value of One thousand
27 Philippine pesos (PHP 1,000.00) per share, which shall be fully subscribed by the
28 government.

29
30 Of the total capital subscribed by the government, One billion Philippine pesos
31 (PHP 1,000,000,000.00) shall be paid by the Government within one year from the
32 effectivity of this Act, and One Billion Philippine pesos (PHP 1,000,000,000.00) every
33 year thereafter for four (4) years for which purpose the amount of One Billion
34 Philippine pesos (PHP 1,000,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated upon the effectivity
35 of this Act, and One Billion Philippine Pesos (PHP 1,000,000,000.00) every year for

1 the next four (4) years thereafter, out of the funds in the National Treasury not
2 otherwise appropriated for the purpose.

3
4 **SEC. 49. Personnel; Cost of Administration.** — The Board of Trustees shall
5 provide for an organization and staff of officers and employees necessary to carry out
6 the functions of the PIMC, fix their compensation, and appoint and remove such
7 officers and employees for cause. The PIMC officers and employees shall be subject
8 to the rules and regulations issued by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) but shall
9 not fall under the Salary Standardization Law. The Board of Trustees shall
10 recommend to the CSC rules and regulations for the recruitment, appointment,
11 compensation, administration, conduct, promotion and removal of all PIMC officers
12 and employees under a strict merit system and prepare and conduct examinations
13 under the supervision of said Commission.

14
15 The administrative expenses of the PIMC during any single fiscal year shall
16 not in any case exceed five percent (5%) of its total assets.

17
18 **SEC. 50. Legal Counsel.** — The Secretary of Justice shall be *ex-officio* legal
19 adviser of the PIMC. Any provision of law to the contrary notwithstanding, the PIMC
20 shall have its own Legal Department, the chief and members of which shall be
21 appointed by the Board of Trustees. The composition, budget and operating expenses
22 of the Office of the Legal Counsel and the salaries and traveling expenses of its
23 officers and employees shall be fixed by the Board of Trustees and paid by the PIMC.

24
25 **SEC. 51. Removal of Members.** — The President of the Philippines may, at any
26 time, remove the Chairperson or any member of the Board appointed by him for, in
27 addition to any and all recognized causes for termination under applicable civil
28 service laws and rules, any of the following causes:

- 29
30 (A) Mismanagement, grave abuse of discretion, infidelity in the conduct of
31 fiduciary relations, or gross neglect in the performance of duties;
32
33 (B) Dishonesty, corruption, or any act involving moral turpitude;
34
35 (C) Any act or performance tending to prejudice or impair the substantial
36 rights of the government and the corporation's stockholders.

1
2 The Chairperson or member may, in any of the above cases, be civilly liable
3 for any damage that may have been suffered by the corporation.
4

5 **SEC. 52.** *Timeline of Organization of the PIMC.* — The PIMC shall be instituted
6 and organized within one (1) year from effectivity of this Act.
7

8 **CHAPTER 11**

9 **THE ICT ACADEMY**

10

11 **SEC. 53.** *Establishment of the ICT Academy and its Purposes.* – The DICT shall
12 establish and develop rules and policies for the operations of an ICT Academy, herein
13 after referred to as the Academy, that shall have the following purposes:
14

- 15 (A) To foster and support the strategic goals of the national ICT
16 development agenda through data collection and globally competitive
17 ICT skills development programs and for other purposes;
18
- 19 (B) To promote the education and training of citizens in ICT skills, for
20 purposes of enhancing the nation's labor capacity in relation to the
21 most relevant and updated data on local and international skills supply
22 and demand;
23
- 24 (C) To promote the development of globally competitive skills and drive an
25 inclusive economic growth;
26
- 27 (D) To promote, foster, and nurture the right of all citizens to quality
28 education in ICT;
29
- 30 (E) To lead the country in setting standards in the development of ICT
31 curriculum and training;
32
- 33 (F) Create and foster partnerships with different persons, entities, and
34 institutions for purposes of developing and updating the Academy's
35 resources, its ICT curriculum, modules, pedagogical approaches; and
36

1 (G) To regularly assess the state of the country in terms of comparative ICT
2 skills and performance, and suggest responsive policies to address
3 concerns.
4

5 **SEC. 54. *Satellite Units.*** – The Academy shall have satellite units in particular
6 regions, provinces or municipalities in the country if, upon determination of the
7 DICT, in coordination with the Commission on Higher Education and the Technical
8 Education and Skills Development Authority, it is found to be necessary to ensure
9 broader access to quality ICT trainings and skills development, and to further
10 enhance the Academy's capability to attain its purposes.
11

12 **SEC. 55. *Access and Admission.*** -- The Academy shall be accessible to all
13 citizens regardless of skill, age, gender, religious belief, economic status, ethnicity,
14 physical disability, political opinion or affiliation.
15

16 The DICT shall institute an admissions process to ensure that citizens shall
17 have equal access to ICT education and that the broadest base of the citizenry shall
18 have ICT education.
19

20 **SEC. 56. *Finances.*** – The Academy's operations shall be financially supported
21 by a budget from the DICT, reasonable fees and dues collected, as well as through
22 donations, in accordance with applicable laws and rules.
23

24 All income collected by the Academy shall be retained and disbursed for the
25 for the benefit of the students, faculty, trainers, and advisers, to serve the
26 acquisition, construction, and maintenance needs of the Academy, as well as the
27 proper administration of its programs and, generally, the attainment of the purposes
28 of the Academy; provided, that such retention and disbursement shall be subjected
29 to applicable laws and rules on government audit and accountability.
30

31 Donations and fees collected shall be held in a fund, to be administered in
32 trust by a Committee created by the DICT for such purpose. The fund shall in no
33 case be impaired. Donations received shall be used only for the purposes for which
34 they were donated.
35

1 **SEC. 57. Partnerships.** – The Academy may form partnerships with different
2 educational institutions and private entities for purposes of achieving the goals of
3 the Academy. Partnerships may be in the form of resource sharing, module and
4 training development, faculty exchange, standards development, trainings
5 collaboration, and other similar forms. All partnerships to be entered into by the
6 Academy shall be in accordance with the law, approved by the DICT Secretary, and
7 shall not require the disbursement of any funds by the Academy or the government.
8

9 **CHAPTER 12** 10 **MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS** 11

12 **SEC. 58. Transitory Provisions.** – In accordance with the objectives of this Act,
13 the DICT, in coordination with relevant government agencies and instrumentalities,
14 as well as private stakeholders and civic organizations, shall study, formulate, and
15 implement a master plan for the transition of the government and its provision of
16 services in the digital age.
17

18 For purposes of this Act, until such time that the government shall have
19 completed the transition in accordance with the objectives of this Act, all government
20 activities covered under this Act shall be conducted in the manner provided for under
21 existing laws and rules.
22

23 The government shall complete the transition in a maximum of five (5) years
24 from effectivity of this Act.
25

26 **SEC. 59. Regular Status Reports.** – All agencies, offices, and instrumentalities
27 of the national and local governments covered under this Act shall submit to the
28 Congress, the President, and to the DICT, an annual report on the status of
29 implementation of this Act. These reports shall likewise be made publicly available
30 on and through the e-portals.
31

32 **SEC. 60. Appropriations and Funding.** – The amount necessary to cover the
33 initial implementation of this Act in the national government level shall be charged
34 against the current year's appropriation of the national government agency, office,
35 or instrumentality concerned. Thereafter, such sums as may be needed for its

1 continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations
2 Act.

3
4 The amount necessary to implement this Act in the local government level
5 shall be charged against the funds of the local government unit concerned.

6
7 **SEC. 61. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from
8 the effectivity of this Act, the DICT, in coordination with relevant offices, agencies,
9 and instrumentalities of the national and local government, shall promulgate the
10 necessary rules and regulations to properly and efficiently implement the provisions
11 of this Act.

12
13 **SEC. 62. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part or provision of this Act shall be
14 declared invalid or unconstitutional, such declaration shall not affect the validity of
15 the remaining provisions of this Act.

16
17 **SEC. 63. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees, letters of
18 instruction and other presidential issuances which are incompatible or inconsistent
19 with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended or repealed accordingly.

20
21 **SEC. 64. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
22 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

23
24 Approved,