



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 536



Introduced by Representative **EDUARDO R. RAMA, JR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As the COVID-19 pandemic forced many traditional office workers to work from home, a subset of these workers joined a growing movement of location-independent workers referred to as Digital Nomads. Digital Nomads are individuals who travel to different places, while relying on technologies to access the internet and do their work from any locations in the world. The Philippines is a great destination for Digital Nomads. Cebu, a thriving economic center and tourism hub, is a perfect base as it offers easy access to fast internet, co-working communities, world-class infrastructure, and numerous tourist destinations.

Today, there are around 54 countries that offer Digital Nomad visas¹. In 2023, a study by an independent workforce management platform reported that 17.3 million American workers currently describe themselves as digital nomads, growing by 2% from 2022 after increasing a staggering 131% from the pre-pandemic year 2019-2022². Significantly, Digital Nomads are reported to contribute \$787 billion to the global economy annually³. They inject money into local economies through spending on accommodations, co-working spaces, food, transportation, entertainment, and other services. This leads to the growth of tourism-oriented industries and in turn further bolster the overall economic growth of the country.

The world is changing in response to the growing Digital Nomad population. Due to the mass advancement of information and communication technologies, emergence of co-working spaces,

¹ Ibrahim, Mon (22 August 2023). *Work without borders. The rise of the digital nomads*. Manila Bulletin. <https://mb.com.ph/2023/8/21/work-without-borders-the-rise-of-the-digital-nomads>

² MBO Partners (August 2023). *Nomadism Enters the Mainstream*, MBO Partners. https://info.mbopartners.com/rs/mbp/images/2023_Digital_Nomads_Report.pdf

³ Bell, Rosie (3 October 2023). *Digital Nomads have billions to spend. Entrepreneurs are chasing in*. BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20231002-digital-nomads-have-billions-to-spend-entrepreneurs-arechasingin#.~:text=One%202023%20survey%20conducted%20by,those%who%20cater%20to%20them.>

changes in work culture, and the appeal of exploring new places while maintaining careers, countries all over the world have taken advantage of this phenomenon by providing for a new visa category called the "Digital Nomad Visa". Thus, the legislative measure seeks to create a special visa category to accommodate Digital Nomads. This bill presents an opportunity for the Philippines to: (1) push tourism development, (2) increase the influx of cash from abroad, and (3) enhance the economic activity of various regions, thereby increasing revenue and generating greater economic productivity.

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



REP. EDUARDO R. RAMA, JR.
2nd District, City of Cebu



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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A NEW VISA CATEGORY FOR DIGITAL NOMADS, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “*Digital Nomad Visa Act*”.

2
3 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote
4 and develop the country as a hub for remote workers and digital nomads. By encouraging the
5 entry of highly skilled individuals who engage in remote work, the State aims to boost
6 economic growth, enrich cultural understanding, foster international cooperation, create local
7 employment opportunities, and cultivate an environment that supports technological
8 advancements and innovative practices.

9
10 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act:

- 11
12 (a) ***Alien or Foreign National*** refers to an individual not a citizen of the Republic of
13 the Philippines;
14
15 (b) ***Client or Employer*** refers to a person, corporation, organization, or any other legal
16 entity that hires, employs, or otherwise engages an individual to perform work or
17 service of any kind in exchange for a salary, wage, or other valuable consideration;
18

- 1 (c) **Digital Nomad** refers to a non-restricted alien who travels freely while working
2 remotely for a foreign client or employer using information and communication
3 technology;
4
- 5 (d) **Digital Nomad Visa** refers to a type of visa granted to an individual pursuant to the
6 provisions of this Act;
7
- 8 (e) **Information and Communication Technology** refers to all communication
9 technologies including the internet, wireless networks, cellular phones, computers,
10 software, video-conferencing, social media/social networking, and other media
11 applications, platforms, or services, that enable users to perform work or services
12 of any kind for a client or employer remotely;
13
- 14 (f) **Remote Work** refers to a working arrangement that allows an individual to regularly
15 perform work or services of any kind outside of the usual place of business of a
16 client or employer, primarily through the use of information and communication
17 technology.
18

19 **SEC. 4. Digital Nomad Visa.** - An alien who is gainfully employed in a country other
20 than the Republic of the Philippines, or who otherwise performs remote work for a client or
21 employer not a citizen of the Republic of the Philippines or not registered pursuant to existing
22 Philippine laws, may apply for and be granted a digital nomad visa to stay in the Philippines
23 for a period of twelve (12) months, renewable for another twelve (12) months, subject to the
24 requirements and conditions provided in this Act.
25

26 **SEC. 5. Qualifications.** - Aliens or foreign nationals applying for a digital nomad visa
27 must possess all of the following qualifications:
28

- 29 (a) At least eighteen (18) years of age;
30
- 31 (b) Gainfully employed in a country outside the Republic of the Philippines, or engaged
32 in remote work for a foreign client or employer as defined in this Act;
33
- 34 (c) Insured under an international health insurance policy with coverage in the
35 Philippines;
36
- 37 (d) Derives income solely from sources outside the Philippines: *Provided*, That such
38 income must be sufficient to support the applicant throughout the stay in the
39 Philippines.
40

41 **SEC. 6. Requirements.** - An alien or foreign national who wishes to apply for a Digital
42 Nomad Visa must present or submit the following:
43

- 1 (a) Proof of employment or contract for services, or any other document evidencing
2 that the alien is engaged in remote work for a foreign client or employer;
3
- 4 (b) Proof of income or ability to support the applicant for the duration of the stay in the
5 Philippines: *Provided*, That such income or means of support is derived solely from
6 sources outside of the Philippines;
7
- 8 (c) International health insurance policy with coverage in the Philippines and valid for
9 the duration of the stay;
10
- 11 (d) Proof that the applicant has no criminal record in the applicant's country of
12 citizenship;
13
- 14 (e) Address of residence or accommodation in the Philippines;
15
- 16 (f) Written undertaking, subscribed before an officer authorized to administer oaths
17 under Philippine laws, that the applicant:
18
- 19 (1) will not engage in gainful employment for or will derive income from a client
20 or employer in the Philippines; and
21
- 22 (2) will not engage in illegal activities, activities detrimental to the public interest,
23 or violate any of the laws, ordinances, rules and regulations of the Philippines;
24 and
25
- 26 (g) Such other requirements that may be imposed under the rules and regulations
27 implementing this Act.
28

29 **SEC. 7. Conditions for Continued Stay under a Digital Nomad Visa.** – As condition
30 for the stay in the Philippines under a digital nomad visa, an alien or foreign national shall:
31

- 32 (a) not engage in gainful employment for or derive income from a client or employer
33 in the Philippines: *Provided*, That a digital nomad who wishes to derive income
34 from any source in the Philippines shall apply for the applicable visa and permits
35 under existing laws, rules, and regulations;
36
- 37 (b) not engage in any illegal activity or activities detrimental to the public interest, or
38 violate any of the laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations of the Philippines;
39
- 40 (c) maintain adequate health insurance coverage for the duration of the stay in the
41 Philippines as a digital nomad; and
42
- 43 (d) comply with the annual reporting requirement of the Bureau of Immigration.
44

1 **SEC. 8. *Conversion of Visa.*** – Pursuant to existing immigration laws, rules and
2 regulations, a foreign national who has entered the Philippines with a valid visa other than a
3 digital nomad visa may apply with the Bureau of Immigration for the conversion of the existing
4 visa into a digital nomad visa: *Provided*, That such foreign national must possess all of the
5 qualifications and must submit all the requirements provided in this Act: *Provided, further*,
6 That the foreign national granted a digital nomad visa under this section shall comply with all
7 the conditions provided in this Act and its implementing rules and regulations.
8

9 A foreign national granted a digital nomad visa may likewise apply for the conversion
10 of visa with the Bureau of Immigration pursuant to existing laws, rules, and regulations.
11

12 Foreign nationals who have been successfully granted a conversion of visa must comply
13 with all the conditions set forth in this Act. Any violation of such conditions shall be a ground
14 for the cancellation of the visa and shall subject the foreign national to fines and penalties
15 provided in this Act and in existing laws, rules and regulations.
16

17 **SEC. 9. *Re-entry.*** – An alien or foreign national who has been granted a digital nomad
18 visa shall be allowed to exit and re-enter the Philippines without need to secure additional
19 permits for the duration of the validity of the digital nomad visa.
20

21 **SEC. 10. *Income from Sources Outside the Country.*** – An alien or foreign national
22 who has been granted a digital nomad visa shall not be deemed a resident of the Philippines for
23 taxation purposes, and the income they receive while in the country from their client or
24 employer outside the Philippines shall not be considered as income from sources within the
25 Philippines, in accordance with existing laws and international tax treaties.
26

27 **SEC. 11. *Revocation of Digital Nomad Visa.*** – The digital nomad visa of a foreign
28 national who has failed to comply with the conditions set forth in this Act or its implementing
29 rules and regulations, or who no longer possesses any of the qualifications set forth in this Act,
30 or who has been found to have submitted fraudulent documentary requirements or false
31 information during the application for or conversion to a digital nomad visa, or who is
32 otherwise found to possess or to have committed any of the grounds for exclusion or
33 deportation, shall be revoked. A foreign national whose digital nomad visa has been revoked
34 shall no longer be allowed to apply for a digital nomad visa.
35

36 **SEC. 12. *Reciprocity.*** – A foreign national applying for a digital nomad visa must be
37 a citizen of a country, state, or territory that grants to citizens of the Republic of the Philippines
38 the same rights and privileges granted to foreign nationals under this Act. For this purpose, the
39 Department of Foreign Affairs shall maintain, regularly update, and share with the Department
40 of Tourism and the Bureau of Immigration, a database of countries, states, and territories that
41 allow Filipinos to acquire digital nomad visas or any other similar visa with the same rights
42 and privileges provided in this Act.
43

1 **SEC. 13. *Digital Nomad Visa Register.*** – A register of all individuals issued a digital
2 nomad visa shall be maintained and regularly updated by the Bureau of Immigration, which
3 shall contain such information as the Bureau may deem necessary.
4

5 **SEC. 14. *Appropriations.*** The amount necessary to cover the initial implementation of this
6 Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Bureau of Immigration.
7 Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall
8 be included in annual General Appropriations Act.
9

10 **SEC. 15. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from the
11 effectivity of this Act, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Bureau of Immigration, Department
12 of Tourism, and the Department of Information and Communications Technology, in
13 consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations
14 for the implementation of this Act.
15

16 **SEC. 16. *Separability Clause.*** – Should any provision of this Act be declared invalid, the
17 remaining provisions shall continue to be in force and effect.
18

19 **SEC. 17. *Repealing Clause.*** – Nothing in this Act shall be deemed to amend, 2 repeal, or
20 modify existing laws, decrees, orders, rules, regulations, or parts 3 thereof, except insofar as
21 the provisions of this Act apply to foreign nationals who 4 apply for and have been granted
22 digital nomad visas pursuant to this Act and its 5 implementing rules and regulations.
23

24 **SEC. 18. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its 8 publication in the
25 Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
26

27 Approved,