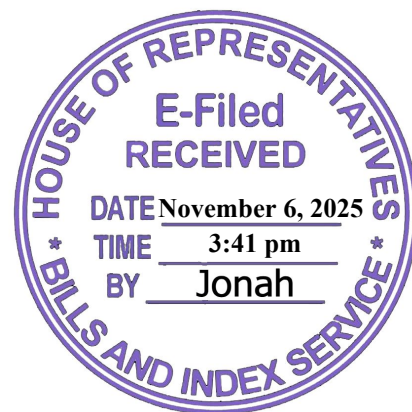




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5785



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE SCIENCE FOR CHANGE PROGRAM AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The advancement of science, technology, and innovation (STI) is crucial for the Philippines to meet the evolving needs of its people and accelerate national development. Recognizing this, the proposed Science for Change Act aims to significantly enhance and systematize the country's STI efforts by establishing clear, comprehensive policies that promote innovation, creativity, and the development of technologies that address present-day challenges and long-term development goals.

This bill mandates the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) to formulate and regularly update a five-year Science for Change Program (S4CP) in collaboration with relevant government agencies and private sector stakeholders engaged in research and development. The S4CP will include new priority areas such as defense and security R&D, space science and technology, information and communications technology (ICT), electronics and artificial intelligence, regional infrastructure and human resource development, as well as science and technology support for creative industries, tourism, and emerging technologies.

Furthermore, the bill requires DOST to develop a harmonized national research and development agenda and a government-wide program for technology adoption, ensuring alignment with the Philippine Development Plan and national priorities. To maximize the impact of public investment in research and innovation, all national government agencies, government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), local government units (LGUs), and state universities and colleges engaged in STI projects must adopt and utilize publicly funded technologies.

In summary, the Science for Change Act seeks to accelerate the Philippines' scientific and technological progress by fostering a more responsive, coordinated, and innovation-driven STI ecosystem that meets the country's socio-economic needs and strengthens its global competitiveness.

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



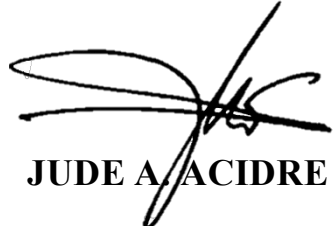
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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Science for Change Program Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – Article XIV of the Philippine Constitution recognizes that “Science and technology are essential for national development and progress.” It declares that “the State shall give priority to research and development, invention, innovation, and their utilization; and to science and technology education, training, and services.” Likewise, “the State shall support indigenous, appropriate, and self-reliant scientific and technological capabilities and their application to the country’s productive systems and national life.”

To this end and in pursuit of excellence in the field of science, technology and innovation (STI), the State needs to accelerate the development of STI in the country through a massive increase in investment, expansion of existing STI initiatives, creation of new programs, development of human resources in STI, and capacity building of research and development institutions.

SEC. 3. *Science for Change Program.* – The Science for Change Program (S4CP) shall be established to achieve a higher standard of STI and contribute to the development of the economy and society. It shall prescribe comprehensive and systematic policies for the promotion of STI. The Program shall encourage innovation and creativity among Filipinos, and come up with new products, technologies and solutions to pressing national problems, and gain competitive edge in the field of research and development.

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

- a. *Harmonized National Research and Development Agenda (HNDRA)* refers to an outcome-based agenda where all research and development (R&D) programs and projects to be funded by the government are envisioned to contribute to: the attainment of the majority of the government's key result areas, particularly responding to poverty reduction and empowerment of the poor and vulnerable; rapid, inclusive, and sustained economic growth; and the integrity of the environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- b. *High-tech equipment* refers to any equipment using the most advanced and developed machines and methods;

- c. *National Innovation Council (NIC)* refers to the policy advisory body, established by virtue of the Philippine Innovation Act, mandated to formulate, develop, implement and monitor the country's innovation goals, priorities, and long-term national strategy;
- d. *Publicly-funded technology* refers to any technology the development or generation of which was funded, in part or in full, using government money or resources;
- e. *Research and development* refers to any systematic and creative work undertaken in the physical, natural, mathematical, and applied sciences by using methods in order to increase the stock of knowledge in these fields to devise new applications;
- f. *Science, Technology, and Innovation* refers to the systematic way of acquiring knowledge through observation and experimentation; *technology* refers to the practical application of science; and *innovation* refers to the creation of new ideas that results to the development of new or improved products, processes, or services which are then spread or transferred across the market; and
- g. *Technology licensing* refers to a mode of technology transfer whereby a licensor (technology generator or owner) authorizes a licensee to use the technology under certain agreed terms and conditions.

SEC. 5. *Science For Change Program Utilization Policy Framework.* – The formulation of the S4CP is anchored on the HNRDA which shall be regularly updated based on the needs of the time.

- a. In order to achieve the objectives of this Act, the following Science and Technology (S&T) programs of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) shall be expanded:

1. Health Self-Sufficiency and Responsiveness to Public Health Emergencies
2. Renewable Energy Systems & Bioenergy Technologies
3. Functional Materials for Alternative Energy Sources and Energy Conversion and Storage
4. Nuclear Science for Energy, Health, Agriculture and Industry
5. Biotechnology, Nanotechnology, and Genomics
6. Climate and Environment Sciences
7. Nutrition and Food Security and Safety
8. Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries Productivity
9. Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Development
10. Transport Solutions
11. Industrial or Manufacturing or Mining Productivity
12. Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation
13. S&T Services for the Production Sector
14. Metrology, Calibration and Standards
15. Technology Transfer or Commercialization
16. Human Resource Development for STI
17. Nurturing a Culture of Science

b. The following new programs shall also be included in the Science for Change Program:

1. Defense and Security R&D
2. Space S&T
3. Information and Communication Technology Development, Electronics and Artificial Intelligence
4. Strengthening of R&D and S&T Services in the Regions through Infrastructure and Human Resource Development

5. S&T for the Creative, Tourism, and Services Industry
6. New and Emerging Technologies

SEC. 6. *Major Strategies of the Science for Change Program.* – The S4CP shall focus on the Accelerated R&D Program for Capacity Building of Research and Development Institutions and Industrial Competitiveness which is composed of four (4) programs namely:

- a. **Niche Centers in the Regions for R&D (NICER).** The NICER Program shall be implemented to address the discrepancy in access to R&D funding among the regions. Through the program, qualified higher education institutions (HEIs) in the regions shall be provided with grants so they can undertake quality research directed at promoting regional development with their existing capabilities and resources. A proposed NICER should be a unique and collaborative project between HEIs, and must be duly endorsed by the Regional Development Council.
- b. **R&D Leadership Program (RDLead).** The RDLead program shall be implemented to help develop and strengthen further the research capabilities of the academe, research and development institutions (RDIs), and other government line agencies nationwide. To this end, RDLeaders who are local S&T experts with strong leadership and innovative policy proficiencies shall be engaged to train, direct, and support R&D goals. Academic institutions, RDIs, and other agencies may engage the services of an RDLeader through a screening and evaluation process to be conducted by the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP) based on their respective needs and

specifications. The NRCP shall be the implementing agency of the RDLead Program.

- c. **Collaborative R&D to Leverage the Economy (CRADLE) for RDIs and Industry.** The CRADLE Program shall be implemented to promote technological advancement and innovation in local companies and to support the growth of the Philippine innovation ecosystem. Through the program, the academe or RDI in partnership with a Filipino company, shall undertake R&D to improve the company's products, processes, and services to become more competitive in their respective industries. To ensure that research outputs from the academe are commercially utilized by the market, beneficiary-companies under this program must provide at least twenty percent (20%) counterpart funding and commit to adopt the technology that shall be developed by their R&D Partner.
- d. **Business Innovation through S&T (BIST) for Industry.** The BIST Program shall be implemented by the DOST to provide financial assistance to Filipino private companies for the acquisition of strategic and relevant technologies so they can undertake their R&D activities. The financial assistance shall be used solely for the purchase of high-tech equipment or to secure technology licensing or patent rights and shall be refunded to the DOST at zero percent interest.

SEC. 7. *Formulation and Submission of the Science for Change Program Plan.* – The DOST shall formulate the five-year S4CP Plan in coordination with other relevant government agencies, including state universities and colleges (SUCs) and representatives from the private sector undertaking R&D. The Secretary of DOST shall submit to the President, for approval, the S4CP Plan within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

A successor S4CP Plan shall be formulated and submitted to the President for approval at least three (3) months prior to the expiration of the existing S4CP Plan.

SEC. 8. *S4CP Management Office.* – The S4CP Management Office shall be created and placed under the supervision of the Office of the Secretary of the DOST. The S4CP Management Office shall ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the Science for Change Programs. It shall perform coordinating and secretariat functions and promote the various S4CP programs.

The Secretary of the DOST shall determine the organizational structure and staffing pattern of the S4CP Management Office in accordance with the Revised Compensation and Position Classification System subject to the evaluation and approval off the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and in compliance with Civil Service rules and other pertinent laws and regulations.

SEC. 9. *The Harmonized National R&D Agenda.* – The DOST shall, in consultation with government institutions and other agencies concerned, formulate a HNDRA and a program for technology adoption for the government in accordance with the priorities of the Philippine Development Plan. The proposed HNDRA shall be submitted to the NIC for approval. The DOST shall certify that all the publicly funded R&D projects form part of the HNDRA subject to the provision on Harmonized National R&D Agenda in the General Appropriations Act.

The DOST shall submit to the DBM, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate of the Philippines, either in printed form or by electronic document, a copy of the approved HNDRA. The DOST Secretary and the agency's web administrator or an equivalent officer shall ensure that the approved HNRDA is posted on the agency's website.

SEC. 10. *Mandatory Adoption of Publicly-Funded Technologies.* – All publicly-funded and generated technologies whenever feasible and practicable shall be utilized by all government entities or instrumentalities. All national government agencies, GOCCs, SUCs, and local government units (LGUs) conducting S&T development projects shall adopt publicly-funded technologies.

SEC. 11. *Administration.* – The S4CP shall be administered by the DOST. The DOST shall coordinate their activities with other departments, agencies and bureaus, including GOCCs and LGUs, to carry out effectively the provisions of this Act.

The DOST shall provide for a mechanism that will prioritize areas for application of research to attain technological advancement and innovation leading to economic development in accordance with this Act.

The DOST may assign the implementation of the S4CP to the research councils and institutes that is consistent and will strengthen its mandate.

They shall consider their enhancement that will complement the specific mandates of the research councils and institutes within the DOST that is consistent to the Philippine Development Plan.

SEC. 12. *Data Banking Responsibility.* – The DOST shall create and maintain a central databank of persons who have availed of S4CP pursuant to this Act to serve as directory and guide in sustaining the pool of STI experts in the country.

The DOST shall require all funding recipients to submit their periodic accomplishment reports to ensure that R&D activities are properly applied and utilized all over the country and technologies are transferred to the private sector to reach the intended users, and to authentically respond to the issues in the Philippine STI ecosystem in accordance to its objectives.

SEC. 13. *International Cooperation in Research and Development.* – The DOST shall undertake and encourage collaboration in the scientific research and development activities with different international scientific organizations and facilitate the active participation of domestic and foreign private entities in order to establish a system of priorities towards filling the basic and immediate needs of the country.

SEC. 14. *Interagency Coordination.* – The DOST shall coordinate and promote cooperation in the application of R&D with various institutions being undertaken by the bureaus, offices, agencies, universities and instrumentalities of the government to prevent duplication.

SEC. 15. *Evaluation and Review.* – The DOST shall undertake at least once every three (3) years a review and evaluation of the S4CP in order to assess, among others, how the program has impacted the state of the STI human resources development, and the local economy, and submit recommendations for its improvement.

SEC. 16. *Donations.* – The DOST is authorized to receive donations, contributions, grants, bequests, or gifts, in cash or in kind, to be used exclusively for the implementation of this Act in accordance with existing budgeting, accounting, auditing and other pertinent laws, rules and regulations.

SEC. 17. *Tax Exemptions and Subsidy.* – Any gifts and donations of real and personal properties shall be exempt from the donor's tax, and the same shall be considered as an allowable deduction from the gross income for purposes of computing the taxable income of the donor in accordance with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

SEC. 18. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act, shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the DOST. Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 19. *Annual Report.* – The DOST shall submit an annual report on the implementation of the S4CP to the Office of the President and to the Committees on Science and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

SEC. 20. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOST shall formulate rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SEC. 21. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain and in full force and effect.

SEC. 22. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 23. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,