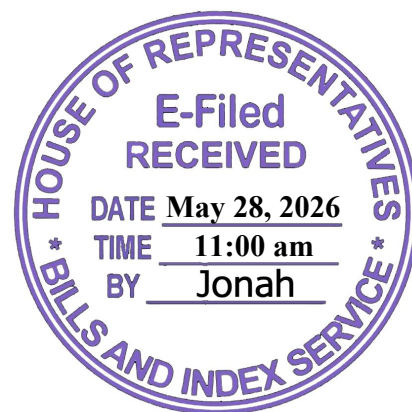




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9489



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

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING A LIVELIHOOD AND ENTERPRISE SUPPORT
PROGRAM FOR BENEFICIARIES OF THE BALIK PROBINSYA,
BAGONG PAG-ASA PROGRAM, PROVIDING FOR LIVELIHOOD
STARTUP KITS, SKILLS TRAINING, AND POST-RELOCATION
SUPPORT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines continues to experience significant regional disparities in economic development, employment opportunities, and access to sustainable livelihoods. This imbalance has contributed to persistent rural underdevelopment and the overconcentration of population and economic activity in major urban centers, resulting in congestion, informal settlements, unemployment, and increased socioeconomic vulnerability.

In response to these long-standing structural challenges, the government launched the *Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa* (BP2) Program, which encourages voluntary relocation of families from urban areas to their home provinces. While the program addresses spatial redistribution, there remains a critical need to ensure that returning families are not only relocated but are also empowered with sustainable and dignified sources of livelihood in their communities.

Thus, this bill seeks to institutionalize a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable livelihood support system for BP2 beneficiaries. It recognizes that successful reintegration requires more than relocation assistance; it demands long-term economic empowerment anchored on skills development, enterprise creation, and local economic integration.

Central to the bill is the establishment of an Enterprise Matching System, which aligns livelihood assistance with local economic conditions, available resources, and the skills of beneficiary households. This ensures that support provided is not arbitrary but strategically designed to foster viable and sustainable microenterprises in the provinces.

The bill likewise institutionalizes safeguards for transparency, accountability, and non-politicization in the selection of beneficiaries and distribution of assistance. A centralized database and monitoring system will be established to prevent duplication, improve program efficiency, and ensure that assistance reaches intended beneficiaries based on objective criteria.

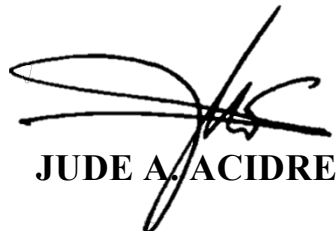
Ultimately, this proposed Act aims to transform the BP2 Program from a relocation initiative into a comprehensive rural development and livelihood empowerment strategy. It seeks to promote inclusive growth, reduce regional inequality, and build resilient provincial economies where Filipino families can thrive with dignity and self-sufficiency.

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


FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ


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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 “*Balik Probinsya Livelihood Package Act*”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote balanced regional development, inclusive economic growth, and equitable

access to livelihood opportunities by empowering Filipino families to rebuild sustainable lives in their home provinces.

The State recognizes that persistent rural underdevelopment, unequal economic opportunities, and excessive urban concentration contribute to poverty, unemployment, congestion, informal settlements, and socioeconomic vulnerability in major urban centers. In line with the constitutional mandate to promote social justice, reduce regional inequalities, and improve the quality of life for all, the government shall strengthen programs that encourage voluntary relocation and reintegration into provincial communities.

Towards this end, the State shall ensure that beneficiaries of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program are provided with responsive, area-specific, and sustainable livelihood assistance that is aligned with local economic conditions, available resources, market opportunities, and the skills and capacities of beneficiary households.

The State shall likewise promote family-centered economic participation, skills development, entrepreneurship, digital inclusion, and community-based enterprise formation in order to achieve long-term self-sufficiency, local employment generation, and resilient regional economies.

To achieve these objectives, the government shall adopt a coordinated, transparent, and data-driven approach among national government agencies, local government units, private sector partners, and civil society organizations in implementing livelihood and reintegration programs under this Act.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. - For purposes of this Act:

- a. *BP2 Beneficiaries* refer to families or individuals officially enrolled in the government's Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa program;
- b. *Livelihood Startup Kits* refer to physical assets, equipment, materials, or digital tools provided to help start a small-scale livelihood or enterprise;
- c. *Enterprise Matching* means the alignment of startup kit content and support services with viable regional industries and the skills, interests, and needs of the beneficiary families; and
- d. *Family-Based Support* refers to the provision of livelihood training, business mentoring, and supplemental services extended to all employable members of the household.

SEC. 4. Lead Implementing Agency. - The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) shall serve as the lead implementing agency of this Act and shall oversee the planning, coordination, implementation, and monitoring of the livelihood assistance programs provided herein.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall assist in beneficiary identification, social preparation, household assessment, and case management services.

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and concerned Local Government Units (LGUs)

shall provide technical, logistical, and sectoral support in the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 5. Program Management Office. - The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) shall establish and maintain a Program Management Office (PMO) for the effective implementation, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of the programs and services provided under this Act. The PMO shall serve as the central coordinating body responsible for:

- a. Beneficiary profiling and enterprise matching coordination;
- b. Planning, procurement, and distribution of livelihood startup kits;
- c. Coordination with partner agencies, local government units (LGUs), Regional Development Councils (RDCs), and private sector stakeholders;
- d. Monitoring and evaluation of livelihood outcomes and enterprise sustainability;
- e. Maintenance of a centralized beneficiary and program database;
- f. Implementation of transparency, reporting, and anti-duplication mechanisms; and
- g. Such other functions as may be necessary to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act.

The PMO may establish regional or provincial coordination units as may be necessary, subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations.

The staffing, organizational structure, and operational requirements of the PMO shall be determined by the DTI in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), subject to civil service laws, rules, and regulations.

SEC. 6. Eligibility and Prioritization of Beneficiaries. - Only beneficiaries officially enrolled and verified under the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa (BP2) Program shall be eligible to receive assistance under this Act, subject to assessment, enterprise matching, and availability of funds.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), concerned Local Government Units (LGUs), and other relevant agencies, shall conduct beneficiary profiling and validation to determine the appropriate livelihood assistance and support services to be provided.

In the selection and prioritization of beneficiaries, preference shall be given to:

- a. Low-income and economically vulnerable households;
- b. Families displaced by unemployment, disasters, public emergencies, or economic disruptions;
- c. Solo parents, senior citizens who remain economically active, and persons with disabilities capable of livelihood participation;
- d. Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and members of geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs);
- e. Households with employable members who have completed or are willing to undergo skills training; and

- f. Beneficiaries residing in provinces identified as priority development areas by the Regional Development Councils (RDCs) or relevant national government agencies.

No household shall receive duplicate livelihood startup kits under this Act within a period to be determined under the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), unless justified by program evaluation, enterprise expansion, disaster recovery, or other meritorious circumstances as may be determined by the DTI.

The DTI shall establish a centralized beneficiary database and verification mechanism to ensure transparency, prevent duplication, and improve program monitoring and accountability.

SEC. 7. Livelihood Assistance to BP2 Beneficiaries. - All qualified BP2 beneficiaries shall be entitled to receive one livelihood startup kit per household, based on a region-specific enterprise matching system. Kits may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Farm tools and inputs (e.g., seeds, fertilizers, livestock)
- b. Food processing and packaging kits
- c. *Sari-sari* store setups
- d. Sewing or dressmaking equipment
- e. Welding, carpentry, or electrical toolkits
- f. Digital livelihood and remote work starter kits (e.g., laptops, connectivity support)

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) shall lead the customization and distribution of the kits.

SEC. 8. Enterprise Matching System. The DTI, in coordination with the Regional Development Councils (RDCs) and LGUs, shall develop an Enterprise Matching Matrix per province to determine:

- a) Local market demand and viable livelihood sectors
- b) Resource availability and supply chains
- c) Skills inventory of returning families
- d) Climate and geographic suitability for enterprise types

This matrix shall guide both kit design and supplemental training.

SEC. 9. Family-Based Support Program. - TESDA, DTI, and DOLE shall jointly implement a family-based capacity-building program, which includes:

- a. Basic financial and digital literacy
- b. Skills upgrading and product development
- c. Cooperative formation and mentorship
- d. Optional employment referral for household members

These services shall be provided on-site through regional or mobile training teams.

SEC. 10. Role of Local Government Units (LGUs). - Local Government Units (LGUs), including provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays, shall serve as key partners in the implementation of this Act and shall provide essential support in

beneficiary identification, local coordination, and enterprise development activities within their respective jurisdictions.

In coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), through the Program Management Office (PMO), and other concerned national government agencies, LGUs shall have the following responsibilities:

- a. Assist in the validation, profiling, and updating of the list of eligible beneficiaries, in accordance with the criteria set under this Act and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR);
- b. Provide local data on economic activities, available resources, infrastructure, and priority livelihood sectors to support the Enterprise Matching System;
- c. Facilitate the identification and provision of suitable venues for training, mentoring, product development, and community-based enterprise activities;
- d. Support the implementation of livelihood assistance programs by ensuring local coordination, peace and order, and logistical support where necessary;
- e. Assist in linking beneficiary enterprises to local markets, cooperatives, private sector partners, and LGU procurement opportunities, subject to applicable laws, rules, and regulations;
- f. Designate a Local Livelihood Focal Person or Office responsible for coordinating with the PMO and ensuring timely implementation and reporting at the local level;
- g. Maintain an updated local registry of beneficiary enterprises and their status, in coordination with the centralized database maintained by the PMO;
- h. Integrate, where practicable, support for beneficiary enterprises into local development plans, investment programs, and relevant LGU initiatives.

LGUs shall ensure that their participation in the implementation of this Act is non-partisan, transparent, and consistent with existing laws, including the Local Government Code of 1991, and shall not engage in any form of political interference in beneficiary selection or program implementation.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall assist in ensuring LGU compliance and coordination with the national implementing agencies.

SEC. 11. Transparency, Accountability, and Non-Politicization. - The implementation of this Act shall adhere to the principles of transparency, accountability, fairness, and non-partisanship.

Beneficiary identification, assessment, selection, and distribution of livelihood startup kits and support services shall be conducted solely on the basis of eligibility, enterprise suitability, and program guidelines established under this Act and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

No elected or appointed public official shall intervene in, influence, or improperly participate in the selection of beneficiaries or the distribution of assistance for partisan political purposes.

The use of names, images, logos, symbols, endorsements, campaign materials, or any form of political branding associated with any public official or political candidate in relation to the implementation of this Act is strictly prohibited.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), through the Program Management Office (PMO), shall establish and maintain:

- a. A centralized and verifiable beneficiary database;
- b. Transparent screening and validation procedures;
- c. Publicly accessible program guidelines and beneficiary selection criteria, subject to existing data privacy laws;
- d. Digital or written records of all distributed livelihood assistance and support services; and
- e. A grievance and complaints mechanism for reporting irregularities, favoritism, fraud, political interference, or misuse of program funds and assets.

All procurement, distribution, and implementation activities under this Act shall be subject to existing government procurement, auditing, and anti-corruption laws, rules, and regulations.

Any public official or employee found to have violated the provisions of this Section shall be subject to appropriate administrative, civil, or criminal liability under existing laws.

SEC. 12. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting System. - The Program Management Office (PMO) established under this Act shall develop and maintain a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and reporting system to assess the

implementation, effectiveness, and sustainability of the livelihood assistance programs provided herein.

The monitoring and evaluation system shall include, but not be limited to, the following indicators:

- a. Number of beneficiaries served and assisted per region or province;
- b. Types of livelihood startup kits and support services provided;
- c. Enterprise operational status and survival rates;
- d. Household income improvement and employment generation;
- e. Participation in training, mentoring, and capacity-building activities;
- f. Market integration, cooperative participation, or business expansion outcomes;
- g. Utilization and accountability of funds and assets distributed under the program; and
- h. Other socioeconomic indicators as may be determined by the DTI and partner agencies.

The PMO shall conduct periodic beneficiary assessments and field validation activities to ensure program effectiveness, transparency, and sustainability.

The DTI, through the PMO, shall submit an annual report to Congress, the Office of the President, and other concerned agencies not later than March 31 of each year, containing:

- a. Program accomplishments and implementation status;

- b. Regional and sectoral performance data;
- c. Fund utilization and audit compliance;
- d. Identified implementation issues and challenges; and
- e. Recommendations for policy, budgetary, and operational improvements.

The PMO shall likewise establish a centralized digital monitoring and beneficiary database to strengthen inter-agency coordination, prevent duplication of assistance, and improve program accountability and data-driven policymaking.

SEC. 13. Post-Livelihood Support and Enterprise Sustainability. - The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), through the Program Management Office (PMO), and in coordination with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), concerned Local Government Units (LGUs), cooperatives, and accredited private sector partners, shall provide continuing post-livelihood support services to beneficiaries under this Act.

Such support services shall aim to promote enterprise sustainability, market integration, income stability, and long-term economic self-sufficiency among beneficiary households.

The post-livelihood support program may include, but shall not be limited to:

- a. Business mentoring, coaching, and enterprise advisory services;

- b. Market linkage assistance, product promotion, and participation in local trade fairs, digital marketplaces, and community-based commerce programs;
- c. Access to additional skills training, product development, and business upgrading programs;
- d. Referral to financing institutions, microfinance programs, cooperatives, and government credit facilities, subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations;
- e. Assistance in business registration, licensing, and compliance with applicable regulatory requirements;
- f. Cooperative formation, association-building, or clustering of beneficiaries engaged in similar livelihood activities;
- g. Digital literacy, e-commerce, and online entrepreneurship support programs; and
- h. Other forms of technical, operational, or developmental assistance necessary to improve enterprise sustainability and household income generation.

The PMO shall conduct periodic follow-up assessments of assisted beneficiaries to determine operational status, identify implementation challenges, and recommend appropriate interventions or additional support services.

Priority shall be given to enterprises demonstrating sustainability potential, employment generation capacity, and strong alignment with local economic development priorities.

SEC. 14. Appropriations. - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriation of the DTI.

Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 15. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - The DTI shall, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), promulgate the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act within one hundred twenty (120) days after its effectivity.

SEC. 16. Separability Clause. - If any part or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 17. Repealing Clause. - All laws, executive orders, issuances, decrees, rules and regulations inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are deemed amended, modified or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 18. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,