

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11263



Introduced by Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA

**AN ACT
FURTHER STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL OFFICES OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Science, technology, and innovation (STI) are essential drivers of national development, economic growth, and social progress. Recognizing this, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) continues to implement programs and initiatives that bring the benefits of science and technology closer to Filipino communities, enterprises, researchers, and other stakeholders throughout the country.

Through programs such as the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SET-UP), Community Empowerment through Science and Technology (CEST), OneLab, and Grants-in-Aid for Research and Innovation on Development (GRIND), the DOST provides technology-based interventions, technical assistance, laboratory and research services, and support for innovation and development. These initiatives are particularly important in addressing the varying needs and challenges of local industries, communities, and research institutions.

However, the growing demand for STI services and interventions requires the DOST to have stronger capabilities at the regional level. The DOST Regional Offices play a vital role in translating national STI policies and programs into concrete interventions responsive to the conditions and priorities of their respective regions. They likewise serve as important partners of local government units (LGUs), industries, academe, research institutions, and other stakeholders in identifying local concerns and developing appropriate science and technology solutions.

Strengthening the DOST Regional Offices will enable the Department to improve the delivery, coordination, and management of its programs and services at the local level. Enhanced regional capacities will facilitate closer engagement with stakeholders, promote stronger partnerships, accelerate the adoption and utilization of appropriate technologies, and ensure that STI interventions are responsive to the distinct needs of communities and industries across the country.

The proposed measure therefore seeks to strengthen the DOST Regional Offices as an integral component of the country's STI development system. By bringing STI closer to the people and strengthening the DOST's capabilities to respond to regional needs, the measure will contribute to a more responsive and effective delivery of STI programs and services throughout the Philippines.

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



RAYMOND ADRIAN E. SALCEDA

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **11263**

Introduced by Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA

**AN ACT
FURTHER STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL OFFICES OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “DOST Regional Office Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to take account of regional and sectoral needs and conditions, to strengthen local government units therein, and to accelerate economic and social growth and development in every part of the country. The State also recognizes the role of science, technology, and innovation for national benefit; as such, there is a need to modernize existing regional offices of the Department of Science and Technology in the generation, transfer, promotion, and regulation of knowledge and application, and to encourage the widest participation of all Filipinos in these endeavors.

SEC. 3. *Objectives.* – The objectives of this Act are the following:

(a) To strengthen the operational capacity of the Department of Science and Technology Regional Offices;

(b) To enhance the implementation of science and technology programs at the regional level;

(c) To integrate the OneLab Program into regional operations to enhance local access to laboratory services;

(d) To improve the delivery of the Community Empowerment Through Science and Technology Program to empower local communities through scientific innovation; and

(e) To establish a unified network that fosters collaboration between local governments, businesses, academic institutions, and the Department of Science and Technology.

SEC. 4. *Functions of the Regional Office.* – The regional offices shall serve as the focal points for the planning and implementation of science, technology, and innovation programs and projects in the regions and shall assume the following primary functions:

(a) Identify needs and opportunities in science, technology, and innovation in the region;

(b) Formulate and implement a regional plan consistent with and supportive of regional development thrusts;

(c) Provide interventions to micro, small, medium enterprises in the regions to improve productivity and competitiveness in local and international markets through the Small Enterprises Technology Upgrading Program, Community Empowerment Through Science and Technology, Grants-in-Aid for Research and Innovation on Development, iHub, and OneLab;

(d) Plan and implement human resource development programs in coordination with relevant institutes, such as scholarships, trainings, and similar activities aimed at creating a critical pool of manpower;

(e) Develop institutional linkages and other mechanisms with regional offices, other agencies, local governments, and private organizations or entities for effective planning and implementation; and

(f) Monitor and coordinate various programs, projects, and activities of councils, institutes, and other attached agencies in the region.

SEC. 5. *Organizational Restructure.* – The Department of Science and Technology Regional Offices shall be restructured to enhance operational effectiveness and improve coordination with local government units, academic institutions, and businesses. The regional office shall be headed by a regional director assisted by at least two (2) assistant regional directors. The designated chief science research specialist shall be reclassified as Director III to serve as assistant regional director.

The department shall determine the organizational structure and staffing pattern of the regional offices, including provincial science and technology offices under Republic Act No. 11914, in accordance with civil service laws, rules, and regulations, subject to review and approval by the Department of Budget and Management. In line with this, existing positions of chief science research specialist currently held by heads of provincial offices shall be reclassified as Director III.

SEC. 6. *Functions and Responsibilities of the Assistant Regional Director/s.* – The Assistant Regional Director shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

(a) *Program Management and Implementation.* –

- 1) Assist the Regional Director in overseeing the implementation of science and technology programs in the region; and

- 2) Ensure the timely and efficient delivery of Department of Science and Technology services, including research and development, technology transfer, innovation support, and training programs.

(b) Coordination with Local Government. –

- 1) Facilitate close coordination with local government units to ensure that Department of Science and Technology programs and projects are aligned with local development priorities; and
- 2) Provide technical assistance to local government units in implementing regional science and technology policies and programs.

(c) Resource Mobilization and Partnership Building. –

- 1) Collaborate with stakeholders, including the private sector, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations, to secure additional resources for regional science and technology projects; and
- 2) Forge partnerships to promote science and technology initiatives and create opportunities for innovation-driven regional development.

(d) Monitoring and Evaluation. –

- 1) Assist in the monitoring, evaluation, and assessment of the effectiveness and impact of Department of Science and Technology programs and projects in the region; and
- 2) Provide recommendations for improving program performance and ensuring that targets are met.

(e) Capacity Building and Technical Assistance. –

- 1) Oversee the training and capacity-building activities for local stakeholders, including government officials, community leaders, and entrepreneurs, to strengthen regional innovation ecosystems; and
- 2) Provide technical assistance to local industries and communities to ensure effective adoption of technologies and innovation.

SEC. 7. *Qualifications of Assistant Regional Director.* – The Assistant Regional Director/s shall be appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology, based on the following minimum qualifications:

(a) A bachelor's degree in science, engineering, technology management, or a related field, with a master's degree in a relevant area preferred;

(b) At least five (5) years of experience in program management, preferably in the science and technology sector, with significant exposure to regional development initiatives; and

(c) Strong leadership, management, communication, and coordination skills, alongside a demonstrated ability to work with diverse stakeholders at the local and national levels.

SEC. 8. *Establishment of OneLab Services in Regional Offices.* – Department of Science and Technology Regional Offices shall establish or upgrade existing regional OneLab centers to provide Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, local government units, and the general public with easier access to laboratory services, including testing, calibration, and product certification. The regional offices shall partner with local laboratories, universities, and other entities to extend laboratory services and testing capabilities to underserved areas. Services provided through OneLab shall be priced reasonably to ensure accessibility to all sectors, especially Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, start-ups, local entrepreneurs, and certified student researchers who shall be entitled to subsidized or waived testing and calibration fees for non-commercial capstone and thesis projects.

SEC. 9. *Strengthening the Community Empowerment Through Science and Technology Program.* – The Community Empowerment Through Science and Technology Program shall be expanded to include additional communities across all regions, focusing on areas in need of scientific assistance to address local challenges.

The program shall focus on providing scientific solutions, including but not limited to the following sectors:

- (a) Agriculture;
- (b) Health and nutrition;
- (c) Education;
- (d) Livelihood and entrepreneurship; and
- (e) Environmental sustainability.

The program shall facilitate the transfer of appropriate technologies to communities, enhancing productivity and livelihoods.

Each Department of Science and Technology Regional Office shall engage local communities to assess needs, provide training, and deliver science-based solutions. An efficient monitoring and evaluation system shall be developed to measure the effectiveness of the program and ensure its sustainability.

SEC. 10. *Establishment of the Grassroots Innovation for Inclusive Development (GRIND) Program.* – The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) shall establish and implement, through its Regional Offices, the Grassroots Innovation for Inclusive Development (GRIND) Program to identify, support, promote, and scale community-led and grassroots innovations. The Program shall be inclusive and accessible to all Filipino citizens, prioritizing the marginalized, rural, and underserved communities. It shall focus on the following key areas:

(a) *Technology and Product Development.* – Providing the necessary technical and financial support for the development and refinement of locally relevant and culturally appropriate innovations;

(b) *Market Access and Commercialization.* – Facilitating market linkage, networking, intellectual property protection, and the commercial opportunities needed for the grassroots innovators;

(c) *Capacity Building.* – Conducting training sessions, mentorship seminars, and capability enhancement initiatives to enable innovators to refine their products, services, and sustainable business models; and

(d) *Sustainability and Scalability.* – Supporting the integration and scaling of viable grassroots innovations into local and regional value chains.

SEC. 11. *Creation of the Regional Science and Technology Innovation Hubs.* – Each DOST Regional Office shall establish a Regional Science and Technology Innovation Hub (RSTIH) to serve as the regional focal centre for the following activities:

(a) *Applied Research and Development.* – The support for regional R&D initiatives geared towards addressing localized challenges, including agricultural productivity, disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, public health, environmental protection, and sustainable energy;

(b) *S&T Capacity Building.* – Implementing skill-development programs for local communities, micro, small, medium enterprises (MSMEs), students, and professionals in order to foster an environment where innovation is at its core; and

(c) *Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration.* – Fostering partnerships between local government units, businesses, and academic institutions to facilitate the application of science and technology for regional development.

(d) *Student Research and Prototyping Support.* – Providing undergraduate and secondary STEM students, as well as academic researchers, with subsidized or open access to shared digital fabrication tools, specialized laboratories, testing facilities, and high-performance computing resources for capstone projects and research aimed at resolving local community challenges.

SEC. 12. *Role of Local Government Units.* – Local government units (LGUs) shall play an active role in the implementation of the CEST Program within their respective areas.

In cooperation with the DOST, the LGUs shall develop and implement a Community Science and Technology Development Plan (CSTDP), which shall be integrated into their local development plans.

Further, this Act empowers LGUs to:

(a) Designate a Science and Technology Focal Officer or Desk within its existing planning, agriculture, or economic development office, responsible for coordinating S&T programs with the DOST Provincial Science and Technology Office (PSTO);

(b) Collaborate with the DOST and local higher education institutions (HEIs) to identify the technological needs of their communities, prioritize technology interventions, and maintain a public registry of local developmental bottlenecks that may be adopted as research and capstone problems by students and academic institutions;

(c) Provide logistical support, facilitate the integration of S&T solutions into local policies, and allocate funds to complement the national government's efforts; and

(d) Support local S&T innovations by facilitating market access, distribution, and sustainability.

SEC. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)*. – The DOST through the Office of the Undersecretary for Regional Operations in consultation with relevant stakeholders shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations of this Act within ninety (90) days after the effectivity thereof.

SEC. 14. *Separability Clause*. – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause*. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 16. *Effectivity*. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,