

**[ REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11035, June 17, 2018 ]**

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE BALIK SCIENTIST PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Balik Scientist Act".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State recognizes that the utilization of the expertise of science, technology or innovation experts of Filipino descent is a vital component of the nation's political, economic, and social development efforts. Hence, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to support the participation of science, technology or innovation experts of Filipino descent in research and development initiatives for our country.

Towards this end, science, technology or innovation experts, such as scientists, professionals, educators, technicians, researchers, engineers, innovators, technologists, technology entrepreneurs or any person with special skills or expertise, who is of Filipino descent, shall be accorded with benefits, incentives and privileges under this Act to encourage and support their participation in strengthening the scientific and technological human resources of public or private institutions and industry in our country to accelerate the development of new or strategically important technologies that are vital to our national development and progress.

SEC. 3. *Balik Scientist Program.* - There is hereby- created a Balik Scientist Program, hereinafter referred to as the "Program", to be administered by the Department, of Science and Technology (DOST).

Under the Program, the DOST shall:

- (a) Survey and identify scientific and technological expertise absent or limited locally which may be addressed by a Balik Scientist as defined in this Act in coordination with the host institution(s);
- (b) Manage and facilitate the processing of applications and awards for short-term, medium-term, or long-term engagement of Balik Scientists in coordination with the host institution);
- (c) Provide and facilitate the release of the appropriate benefits and incentives provided under this Act to Balik Scientists who have passed the application process of the DOST in coordination with the respective host institution(s);
- (d) Issue the appropriate rules and regulations for the efficient provision of benefits

and incentives, which shall include the clarification of pertinent rules and regulations promulgated and administered by other government agencies;

(e) Monitor the implementation of the Program, in coordination with the respective host institution(s). and the fulfillment of the agreed obligations and responsibilities of Balik Scientists under the Program;

(f) Assess the actual, and/or anticipated impact of each short-term, medium-term, long-term engagement awarded, and the overall implementation of the Program; and

(g) Issue the guiding science, technology, or innovation research and development, and industry development agenda that shall guide the implementation of prioritization in the provision of awards and grants-in-aid provided under this Act.

The DOST shall prioritize the awarding of short-term, medium-term, and long-term engagements, and grants-in-aid provided under this Act that complement or address needs in ongoing or prospective government programs and projects of local and national significance. The DOST shall determine other privileges and incentives that may be extended to Balik Scientists.

SEC. 4. *General Program Objectives.* - The Program shall aim to strengthen the scientific and technological human resources of the academe, public and private institutions, including locally registered enterprises in order to promote knowledge sharing and accelerate the flow of new technologies into the country.

Towards this end, the DOST shall approve and award short-term, medium-term, and long-term engagements to Balik Scientists, and ensure their participation in activities such as, but not limited to, mentorship, training, lecture, research and development, technology transfer initiatives, and other similar endeavors in any institution subject to the agreement between the DOST, the Balik Scientist, and the host institution, and in due consideration of national priorities and agenda on science, technology or innovation, research and development, and industry development.

SEC. 5. *Definition of Terms.* — For the purpose of this Act:

(a) *Balik Scientist* — a science, technology or innovation expert or professional, as certified by the DOST, who is a Filipino citizen or a foreigner of Filipino descent, accorded with benefits and incentives under this Act to undertake science and technology activities along his or her field of expertise with a host institution under short-term, medium-term, or long-term engagement, who is either:

(1) A resident of another country at the time of application; or

(2) A Philippine-resident for not more than three (3) years at the time of application, beginning from the most recent date of arrival from overseas education or employment along his or her field of expertise:

*Provided,* That those without graduate degrees equipped with exceptional expertise can be qualified under this Program;

(b) *Balik Scientist Program* - the Program institutionalized under this Act:

(c) *Host Institution* — a government, agency, public or private academic institution, or a locally registered enterprise in the Philippines that will undertake science, technology or innovation activities, or research and development initiatives with a Balik Scientist:

(d) *Short -Term Engagement*. - the term of engagement under the Program with a minimum duration of fifteen (15) days to a maximum duration of six (6) months per award to be served within one (1) year from the date of the award:

(e) *Medium-Term Engagement*, - the term of engagement under the Program with a duration of more than six (6) months but not to exceed one (1) year per award to be served within two (2) to three (3) years from the date of the award: and

(f) *Long-Term Engagement* - the term of engagement under the Program with duration of more than one (1) year to three (3) years, subject to renewal to be determined by the DOST and to be served within five (5) years from the date of the award.

SEC. 6. *General Benefits, Incentives, and Privileges*. - All Balik Scientists under the short-term, medium-term, or long-term engagements shall be eligible for the following general benefits, incentives, and privileges:

(a) Exemption from the licensing or permitting requirements of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC): *Provided*, That the DOST shall submit to the PRC the list of Balik Scientists with the corresponding duration of awarded engagement;

(b) Accident and medical insurance covering the duration of the engagement awarded by the DOST;

(c) Reimbursement of expenses for excess baggage allowance related to scientific project *or* activities:

(d) Exemption from renouncing their oath of allegiance to the country where they took the oath, unless the Balik Scientist after the service decides to repatriate and retain the government position, as applicable;

(e) Tax and duty exemption in the donation of equipment, instruments, and materials to the DOST: *Provided*, That the DOST shall bear the freight and storage expenses related to the importation and transportation of the donated equipment, instruments, and materials; and

(f) Tax and duty exemption in the importation of professional equipment, instruments, and materials of the Balik Scientists.

SEC. 7. *Term-Specific Benefits, Incentives, and Privileges*. - Balik Scientists shall be eligible for the benefits, incentives, and privileges under the following terms of engagement:

(a) Short-Term Program:

(1) One (1) round-trip airfare originating from a foreign country to the Philippines, exempt from Philippine Travel Tax;

(2) When applicable, application for a visa duly subsidized and facilitated by the DOST whose validity shall cover- the duration of the awarded engagement;