

S. No. 2893
H. No. 6452

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress

Third Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-second day of July, two thousand twenty-four.

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[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 12290]

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COLLABORATIVE AND COMPLEMENTARY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM ON VIROLOGY AND VACCINE, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE VIROLOGY AND VACCINE INSTITUTE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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 “Virology and Vaccine Institute of the Philippines (VIP) Act”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of the people to health, and instill health consciousness among them. The State also recognizes that science and technology are essential for national development and progress.

To this end, the State shall adopt a One Health approach, recognizing the interconnectedness of humans, animals, plants, and their shared environment. The State shall formulate and implement policies to address One Health issues, prioritizing research and development, promoting innovations in both technology and services, ensuring the quality and adequacy of human resources, strengthening biosafety standards, and promoting the use and appropriate utilization of safe and indigenous practices.

In this regard, the State shall prioritize the establishment of an institute to lead in-depth studies on pathogens and potential disease-causing agents affecting people, plants, animals, and the environment. This institute shall provide the scientific basis for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of diseases, as well as for the development of policy recommendations. It shall conduct research and development on disease-causing pathogens, including diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines.

SEC. 3. *Objectives.* – This Act seeks to establish a Virology and Vaccine Institute that shall focus on research and development to address pathogens and potential disease-causing agents affecting plants, animals, and humans. Its mandate shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) Undertaking discovery programs in the field of virology and related disciplines, including molecular biology, bioinformatics, and other related fields of research;
- (b) Conducting vaccine research primarily from discovery to the pre-clinical phase of development;
- (c) Conducting research and development of diagnostics and therapeutics on viruses and other pathogens;
- (d) Collaborating, coordinating, and disseminating evidence-based policies on virology and vaccine science to stakeholders;
- (e) Establishing linkages with local and international networks through cooperation and collaboration with institutions engaged in virology and vaccine research and development;

(f) Training and engaging with experts for capacity building of virology and vaccine research;

(g) Investing and operating on virology infrastructure, including high-containment facilities, biobanks, and genome laboratories, for the research of potential emerging and reemerging outbreaks; and

(h) Providing technical assistance and laboratory use to support research communities.

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

(a) *Bacteriophage* refers to any group of viruses that infect specific bacteria, usually causing their disintegration or dissolution;

(b) *Biosafety* refers to containment principles, technologies, and practices that are implemented to prevent unintentional exposure to biological agents or their inadvertent release;

(c) *Diagnostics* refers to the development of tools such as medical devices, techniques, and procedures that are used for the identification of viruses and other pathogens that cause diseases in plants, animals, and humans;

(d) *Discovery programs* refer to the first stage of research focused on identifying and developing new vaccine candidates by exploring novel antigens, immune targets, and technologies to combat infectious diseases;

(e) *High-containment facilities* refer to facilities that are necessary for carrying out research activities involving high-risk pathogens, such as Avian influenza and other hemorrhagic diseases that pose a serious public health burden;

(f) *One Health* is a collaborative, multisectoral, and transdisciplinary approach, working at the local, regional, national, and global levels, with the goal of achieving interconnectedness among people, animals, plants, and their shared environment;

(g) *Pathogen* refers to any microorganism such as, but not limited to, a virus, bacterium, fungus, or protozoan that can cause diseases in a host;

(h) *Preclinical stage and/or phase* refers to the stages of research and development that occur before a drug or vaccine is tested on humans, which aim to assess the safety, efficacy, and biological mechanism of a candidate drug or vaccine in controlled laboratory settings;

(i) *Therapeutics* refer to bacteriophages, nanotechnology treatment approach, nucleic acid-based treatment, remedial agents, or drugs for the treatment of viral diseases and infections in plants, animals, and humans;

(j) *Vaccine* refers to a product that induces or stimulates active acquired immunity by producing antibodies for a specific infectious agent. It helps the body's immune system to recognize and fight pathogens like viruses or bacteria; and

(k) *Virology* refers to the scientific discipline concerned with the study of the biology of viruses and viral diseases in plants, animals, and humans, with medical importance and pandemic potential, including the distribution, pathogenicity, viral cytopathicity, biochemistry, physiology, molecular biology, biotechnology, ecology, tropism, spillover or interspecies transmission, evolution, and clinical aspects of viruses.

SEC. 5. *Creation of the Virology and Vaccine Institute of the Philippines.* – The Virology and Vaccine Institute of the Philippines (VIP) is hereby created and shall be an attached agency of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) for purposes of policy and program coordination to ensure alignment in national policies and priorities.

The VIP shall serve as the lead convener for research and development in the field of virology, encompassing all kinds of viruses and other pathogens in plants, animals, and humans. It shall be a venue for scientists, researchers, government agencies, research institutes, and other organizations in the Philippines and abroad to work collaboratively in studying viruses and other pathogens of agricultural, industrial, clinical, and environmental importance.

SEC. 6. *Powers, Functions, and Duties.* – To accomplish its mandate, the VIP shall have the following powers, functions, and duties:

(a) Serve as the lead convener for the formulation of the National Virology Research Agenda, which shall encompass research involving viruses and other pathogens of plants, animals, and humans;

(b) Undertake research and development in the field of virology;

(c) Conduct research and development in the areas of diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines, in cooperation with concerned government agencies and the private sector;

(d) Promote and undertake the transfer of the results of scientific research and development through collaboration with government agencies, industry, and the academe;

(e) Promote, advocate, and oversee virology research ethics, biosafety, and biosecurity;

(f) Develop and maintain information systems on virology science and technology for use by both the public and the private sectors;

(g) Develop and implement, together with concerned government agencies and the private sector, programs for strengthening scientific and technological capabilities in virology and relevant disciplines through human resource development, infrastructure, and institution and capability building;

(h) Undertake policy research and other policy-related studies on virology;

(i) Provide laboratory and technical services on virology;

(j) Promote and advocate for national programs on virology science and technology;

(k) Establish linkages with local and international partners;

(l) Foster linkage and alignment with the private sector for public-private partnership, in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations;

(m) Establish joint research programs and share expertise and resources with the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) and other relevant institutions;

(n) Ensure seamless collaboration with RITM and other pertinent research bodies to delineate specific roles and responsibilities, ensuring that the research agenda is complementary rather than duplicative;

(o) Foster an environment of equity in research and development by prioritizing collaborative projects that advance scientific progress;

(p) Engage in different modes of financing, as applicable, for the development of new industries, products, and services consistent with its mandate; and

(q) Perform such other powers and functions such as, but not limited to, clinical research and clinical trials, as may be deemed necessary and incidental for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Director and Deputy Directors.* – The VIP shall be headed by a Director and assisted by two (2) Deputy Directors: one (1) for Research and Development, and one (1) for Support, Policy, and Linkages.

The Deputy Director for Research and Development shall oversee the operations of the Virus Research, Diagnostics and Therapeutics Research, Vaccines Research, and Technical Services and Training for Virology.

The Deputy Director for Support, Policy, and Linkages shall oversee the operations of the Policy, Planning, Linkages, and Finance and Administration.

Upon the recommendation of the VIP Board, as provided in Section 8 of this Act, the President of the Philippines shall appoint the Director who must possess a bachelor's degree in the field of microbiology or biology, a doctorate degree in virology or other related specialization, and at least five (5) years of experience in the field of virology. The Director shall have the rank of Director IV, Salary Grade (SG) 28, and shall exercise overall responsibility over the activities of the VIP. The Director shall report the results of research and development studies to the VIP Board.

The Deputy Directors shall have a rank of Director III, SG 27. The Deputy Director for Research and Development must possess a bachelor's degree in the field of microbiology or biology, at least a master's degree in virology or other related specialization, and at least three (3) years of experience in the field of virology; while the Deputy Director for Support, Policy, and Linkages must possess at least a master's degree and at least three (3) years of experience relevant to the position.

SEC. 8. *The VIP Board.* – There is hereby created a VIP Board that shall be the policymaking body for the scientific and technological activities of the VIP. The VIP Board shall be chaired by the Secretary of the DOST and co-chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA). The members shall be composed of the following:

(a) Undersecretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);

(b) Undersecretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA);

(c) Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);

(d) Director General of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA);

(e) Director of the RITM;

(f) Director of the VIP;

(g) Executive Director of the University of the Philippines-National Institutes of Health (UP-NIH);

(h) President of the National Academy of Science and Technology;

(i) Executive Director of the National Research Council of the Philippines; and

(j) Two (2) representatives from the private sector appointed by the President of the Philippines, as nominated by the VIP Board. They must be Filipino citizens with recognized competence in the fields of medical virology, genomics, plant virology, animal virology, epidemiology, genetic engineering, or other related disciplines.

The chairperson, co-chairpersons, and members shall each designate a permanent representative to the Board, who must possess sufficient and relevant experience. The permanent representative shall be duly authorized to act on behalf of his/her principal, in the principal's absence.

The Chairperson of the VIP Board shall have voting rights in case of a tie.

SEC. 9. *Secretariat.* – There is hereby created a Secretariat to support the VIP in carrying out its functions. The VIP Board shall provide for the institutional setup, qualifications, and compensation of employees composing the Secretariat, in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations.

SEC. 10. *Salary, Staffing Pattern, and Qualifications.* – Subject to the approval of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the VIP shall determine its organizational structure, create divisions or units as it may deem necessary, and appoint its officers and employees, in accordance with existing Civil Service Commission (CSC) laws, rules, and regulations.

The VIP shall have technical and administrative support staff and consultants. The consultants may come from the public and the private sectors on a consultancy or contractual basis.

SEC. 11. *Interagency Cooperation.* – The VIP shall collaborate with the DOH, RITM, FDA, DA, DENR, DFA, CHED, UP-NIH, Department of Finance, and other relevant government agencies, in accessing and mobilizing available information, reports, technical expertise, equipment, materials, and supplies as may be required to implement this Act.

The RITM shall retain its current functions under the DOH and shall collaborate with the VIP. It shall continue to provide expertise in the detection and identification of emerging infectious diseases and laboratory support. In line with its current mandate and in close collaboration with the VIP, the RITM shall conduct research, surveillance, and diagnostics for newly identified pathogens to formulate effective strategies for the prevention and control of emerging diseases.

The scientific findings of the VIP, RITM, and other concerned agencies shall be integrated in the plans relating to disease control and prevention of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases, as created by Executive Order No. 168, series of 2014, and the National Task Force to prevent the entry of animal-borne diseases, as created by Executive Order No. 105, series of 2020, or its successor body, for the management of public health emergencies relating to infectious diseases.

SEC. 12. *Engagement of Balik Scientists and Foreign Experts.* – The VIP may engage the services of Balik Scientists and foreign experts, who shall work together with local scientists and experts, following the terms of reference and compensation structure in accordance with Republic Act No. 11035 or the "Balik Scientist Act", and other existing laws.

SEC. 13. *International Cooperation.* – The VIP shall establish strategic partnerships with the world's leading scientists, virology centers and institutes, international organizations, and non-government organizations, and conduct

innovative and pioneering research that will advance the frontiers of virology and vaccine research and development in the country. It may enter into a memorandum of agreement or understanding with international partners, including, but not limited to, the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), upon the approval of its VIP Board, and in compliance with existing laws, rules, regulations, and issuances of the DFA. The DFA shall provide legal and other forms of assistance related to international cooperation with the VIP.

SEC. 14. *Promotion of the Virology Industry.* – The VIP, in partnership with the DOH, RITM, DA, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and other concerned agencies shall jointly develop an industry roadmap for products and services that can be created and improved by research from the VIP. This roadmap shall include an outline of how the research and development activities of the VIP will contribute to achieving vaccine self-reliance. As far as practicable, the industry roadmap shall include the use of local materials in the development of new products and services. The developed or established industry resulting from the VIP research shall be included in the national government's priority industries for incentives.

SEC. 15. *Public-Private Partnerships.* – The VIP, DTI, and Public-Private Partnership Center shall collaborate in seeking Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for the development of new industries, products, and services, including the clinical phase of vaccine production. The VIP may also request the assistance of other national and local government agencies in seeking PPPs.

SEC. 16. *Promotion of Knowledge-transfer and Research in the Academe.* – The VIP shall promote the creation of hubs and programs for virology research and development in the academe, particularly in state universities and colleges (SUCs). To this end, the VIP shall assist SUCs in the creation of virology courses and programs, open internships, and scholarships for qualified students of higher education institutions (HEIs), and collaborate with HEIs in the creation of virology research centers.

The CHED shall collaborate with the DOST in the promotion of HEI-VIP partnerships.

SEC. 17. *Protection of VIP-developed Intellectual Property.* – The VIP Board shall ensure that all technologies developed exclusively by the VIP shall be protected by intellectual property laws, in accordance with Republic Act No. 10055 or the "Philippine Technology Transfer Act of 2009", Republic Act No. 8293 or the "Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines", and other applicable laws.

Any patent or property right award granted to the VIP shall be held by and in the name of the Philippine government. In the case of partnerships where the VIP is a collaborating research partner, the VIP Board shall ensure that technologies co-developed by the VIP shall also be co-owned by the Philippine government, and correspondingly accorded intellectual property protection under the law.

SEC. 18. *Procurement of Specialized Materials, Equipment, and Services.* – The VIP shall undertake the procurement of specialized materials, equipment, and services to be used in its operation and administration, in accordance with Republic Act No. 12009 or the "New Government Procurement Act", and other existing laws, rules, and regulations.

SEC. 19. *Official Site of the VIP.* – A lot with an area equivalent to at least five (5) hectares under the administration of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) within the New Clark Economic Zone in the Province of Tarlac shall be allocated exclusively for the VIP, its research facilities, and laboratories. The biosafety infrastructure shall be designed based on risk assessment standards and guidelines of the WHO and the WOAH for handling specific pathogens and the establishment of virology laboratories in developing countries.

To safeguard the well-being and security of the human, plant, and animal populations within the VIP facilities area, the VIP shall coordinate with the Department of National Defense (DND) regarding the establishment and security of the said facilities.

SEC. 20. *Entitlement to Magna Carta Benefits.* – Qualified employees of the VIP shall be covered by Republic Act No. 8439 or the “Magna Carta for Scientists, Engineers, Researchers and Other S & T Personnel in the Government”, as amended, and other rules and regulations issued by appropriate government agencies.

SEC. 21. *Authority to Negotiate, Receive Donations, Grants, Gifts, Legacies, Endowments, and Contributions.* – The VIP may negotiate with and receive from any public or private domestic or foreign sources, donations, grants, gifts, legacies, endowments, contributions, or other transfers of ownership and/or possession of real or personal properties of all kinds in favor and for the benefit of the VIP.

SEC. 22. *Virology Research Fund.* – A Virology Research Fund is hereby established as a special account in the General Fund and shall be sourced from all donations, grants, gifts, legacies, endowments, contributions, and bequests, in cash or in kind, received by the VIP from various sources in accordance with accounting and auditing standards, rules, and regulations: *Provided*, That the acceptance of grants, in cash or in kind, from government of foreign countries shall be subject to the approval by the President of the Philippines or his/her authorized representative based on the recommendation of the Secretary of Finance: *Provided, further*, That other donations, in cash or in kind, from foreign governments shall require prior clearance and approval by the President or his/her authorized representative based on the recommendations of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs: *Provided, finally*, That the fund shall be deposited with the National Treasury through the treasury single account for proper monitoring and accounting.

SEC. 23. *Tax Exemptions.* – Donations, grants, gifts, endowments, and contributions actually, directly, and exclusively used for the purpose of the VIP shall be exempt from donor's tax and shall be considered as allowable deduction from gross income for purposes of computing the taxable income of the donor, in accordance with Section 34 (H)(2)(a) of Republic Act No. 8424 or the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

SEC. 24. *Annual Report.* – The VIP shall submit its annual report to the President and to the Committees on Science and Technology of both Houses of Congress not later than the 30th of March of every year following the effectivity of this Act. The annual report shall provide a full and detailed account of the status of the implementation of this Act and policy recommendations.

SEC. 25. *Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.* – There shall be a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on the VIP Act, which shall be jointly chaired by the Chairpersons of the Committees on Science and Technology of the Senate and the House of Representatives. It shall be composed of the Chairpersons of the Senate Committees on Health and Demography, and Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform, the Chairpersons of the Committees on Health, and Agriculture and Food of the House of Representatives, and two (2) members from each House representing the minority who shall be appointed by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 26. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the DOST. Thereafter, such amount needed for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 27. *Transitory Provisions.* –

(a) All offices and units under the DOST system whose functions are related to virology research programs shall be absorbed by the VIP and shall be transferred accordingly within three (3) years. It shall include all functions, assets, capital, records, funds, receivables, equipment, and facilities of the concerned DOST offices and units. The DOST shall conduct an audit and inventory of assets, liabilities, and human resources of the transferred offices and units under the DOST system to the VIP.

To the greatest extent possible and in accordance with Republic Act No. 6656 or “An Act to Protect the Security of Tenure of Civil Service Officers and Employees in the Implementation of Government Reorganization”, and other

existing laws, all employees of the affected offices and units shall be absorbed by the VIP. Personnel hired on a permanent basis and with appointments attested to by the CSC who may be affected by the transition of DOST offices and units to the VIP, or who will not be absorbed in the new staffing pattern of the different offices and units in the VIP, shall have the option to:

(1) Be transferred to other offices or units within the DOST in accordance with civil service law, rules, and regulations; or

(2) Avail of the applicable retirement benefits and separation incentives as provided under Republic Act No. 6656 and other relevant laws.

(b) Incumbent DOST officials and employees may be considered to assume positions in the VIP, subject to competency evaluation and CSC regulations. All project-based personnel of the DOST doing virology related research and development shall be subject to the qualification standards provided for by laws and the rules and regulations of the CSC.

(c) Research grants acquired during the transition of DOST offices and units transferred to VIP shall be utilized solely for the grants' intended purposes for each of the affected offices and units.

(d) Existing contracts and agreements entered into by the affected personnel with third parties prior to the enactment of this Act shall remain valid.

SEC. 28. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DOST Secretary, in consultation with the DOH, RITM, DA, DBM, CSC, and other relevant government agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act. Failure to promulgate the rules and regulations of this Act shall not prevent its implementation upon effectivity.

SEC. 29. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 30. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.


SEC. 31. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.


Approved,


FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ
Speaker of the House
of Representatives


FRANCIS "CHIZ" G. ESCUDERO
President of the Senate

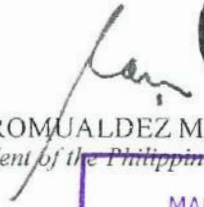
This Act, which is a consolidation of Senate Bill No. 2893 and House Bill No. 6452, was passed by the Senate of the Philippines and the House of Representatives on June 9, 2025.


REGINALD S. VELASCO
Secretary General
House of Representatives


RENATO N. BANTUG JR.
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: SEP 12 2025




FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.
President of the Philippines



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ATTY. LOVELY V. TOLENTINO-NAVA
DIRECTOR IV

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