



Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Elliptical Road, Diliman
1100 Quezon City

SPECIAL ORDER

No.: 319
Series of 2021

SUBJECT: CREATION OF AN AD HOC TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP FOR THE REVIEW OF THE MANDATE OF THE DA BIOTECH PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Biotechnology Program or DA Biotech Program was created in 2000, pursuant to Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) of 1997, with funding assistance from the US PL-480 Food for Peace Program to help create an enabling environment for the development and beneficial use of agricultural biotechnology as one of technology options for food security, sector competitiveness, and resilience to climate change;

WHEREAS, the Program's mandate is implemented by supporting biotech research and development; policy research and advocacy; institutional capacity enhancement; and information, education and communication;

RECOGNIZING THAT, the Program has helped generate and validate a total of 26 technologies; of which, 17 technologies have been successfully adopted/transferred to intended users and 9 technologies have the potential for technology upscaling and transfer;


CONSIDERING THAT, the one and so far the only genetically modified crop allowed for commercial propagation in the country is GM corn while other GM crops, such as *Bt* eggplant, virus-resistant and delayed ripening papaya, *Bt* cotton, and Golden Rice are still in the research and development, and regulatory pipeline;

NOTING THAT, modern biotechnology adoption is encouraging such that GM corn cultivation areas increased by 70 folds, i.e., 10,000 hectares in 2003 to almost 700,000 hectares in 2019, in the past 16 years;

RECOGNIZING THAT, modern biotechnology is an innovation that holds great potential to address continued challenges in agricultural productivity, climate change, food security, food safety, and low adoption rate of technologies;

DESIRING THAT, DA interventions on the application of modern biotechnology are reinforced to support the Eight Paradigms of "New Thinking" for Philippine Agriculture and One DA Approach to Level Up the Agriculture Sector towards building a food-secure and resilient Philippines with prosperous and empowered farmers and fishers;

NOW, THEREFORE, in the exigency of public service, a review of the mandate of the DA Biotech Program is hereby formalized and an *ad hoc* technical advisory group is created to undertake such review. The *ad hoc* group shall be composed of the following technical experts and relevant DA officials:


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Chair: **Saturnina C. Halos, PhD**
Affiliation: Biotechnology Coalition of the Philippines
Field of expertise: Plant Breeding and Genetics, research and regulatory policies

Members from DA Biotech Program Technical Committees:

- 1. Abraham J. Manalo, PhD**
Affiliation: UP Diliman National College of Public Administration and Governance
Field of expertise: Public Policy and Policy Research
- 2. Ma. Carmen Ablan-Lagman, PhD**
Affiliation: De la Salle University
Field of expertise: Aquaculture and Fish Breeding, Population Genetics, Genomics
- 3. Jaine C. Reyes, PhD**
Affiliation: UPLB College of Public Affairs and Development
Field of expertise: Public Policy, R&D Management, Technology Assessment and Commercialization, Knowledge Management
- 4. Minda C. Manantan, PhD**
Affiliation: National Meat Inspection Service (technical and policy consultant)
Field of expertise: Regulatory policy, institutional development, public policy

Relevant DA officials as invited members:

- 5. Ms. Alicia G. Ilaga**
Director-Coordinator, DA Climate Resilient Agriculture Office
Former Director, DA Biotech Program Office
- 6. Fr. Emmanuel N. Alparce**
Chair, Technical Committee on Information, Education, and Communication
DA Biotech Program Office
- 7. Vivencio R. Mamaril, PhD**
Director, Bureau of Agricultural Research
Former Director, DA Biotech Program Office
- 8. Mr. Jonar I. Yago**
Assistant Director, Research and Development and Pest Management
Bureau of Plant Industry

The Terms of Reference of members of the technical committee are as follows:

1. Rapidly scan the current state of agricultural biotechnology in the Philippines, e.g., research and development, ag-biotech industry, among others, and identify prospects and gaps
2. Rapidly scan the global state and developments of agricultural biotechnology and its relevant sectors and industries, and identify prospects for the Philippines and gaps

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3. Scan national development plans and identify prospective contribution of biotechnology and gaps, and strategic positioning of DA Biotech Program
4. Review the implementation of the Program mandate, achievements, and challenges and identify prospects and gaps

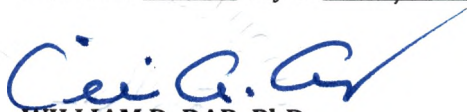
The Terms of Reference of the other DA officials are to scan DA organizational structure, thrusts, priorities, and strategies; and identify prospective contribution of biotechnology and gaps, and strategic positioning of DA Biotech Program.

The DA Biotech Program Office shall provide technical assistance, and facilitate the work and meetings of the technical advisory group.

Non-DA experts are entitled to receive honoraria charged against the DA Biotech Program funds, subject to existing government accounting and auditing rules and procedures.

This order shall take effect immediately and shall remain effective until completion of the assignment.

Done this 6th day of May 2021.


WILLIAM D. DAR, PhD
Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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