

## Concentrix views gov't as 'receptive' to expanding work from home

By **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**  
Reporter

CONCENTRIX, an information technology and business process outsourcing (IT-BPO) company, said the government appears to be "receptive" to the industry's proposals to expand work-from-home (WFH) arrangements.

Chris Caldwell, Concentrix president and chief executive officer, said on the sidelines of a company launch of three new sites last week that he is optimistic that the government will ultimately resolve the WFH standoff with BPOs.

The industry is currently required by law to conduct most of its operations onsite within economic zones in order to continue enjoying fiscal incentives.

"Our wish is that the Philippine government supports WFH more aggressively and they are thinking about how to be competitive on a global scale. The feeling we get is that the government is very receptive to that right now. We've got very positive feedback that the Cabinet secretaries are working together to solve this problem before Sept. 12," Mr. Caldwell said.

"This government has been incredibly supportive of us trying to figure out a solution, and I'm more optimistic that I've ever been that they'll come up with a workable solution. My wish is that the WFH issue is resolved quickly and clearly," he added.

Sept. 12 marks the expiry of temporary authorization for the industry to do most of its work from home, a policy initially adopted for safety reasons during the pandemic.

On June 21, the inter-agency Fiscal Incentives Review Board (FIRB) issued Resolution No. 017-22, which temporarily allows registered information technology and business process management (IT-BPM) firms to maintain a 70% onsite and 30% WFH arrangement (70:30) until Sept. 12 while continuing to enjoy fiscal incentives under Republic Act No. 11534 or the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) law.

The FIRB oversees the grant of tax incentives to registered business enterprises.

Mr. Caldwell said that the industry has ample growth opportunities, which will be affected if the WFH issue is not addressed.

"The Philippines will still grow, the industry will still grow in the Philippines, it just won't grow (to potential) if the WFH issue is not addressed. We'll wait and see what the government will come up with," Mr. Caldwell said.

### FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link [bit.ly/WFH082222](https://bit.ly/WFH082222)

# House kicks off budget season with arrival of spending plan from gov't

THE House of Representatives will receive the P5.26 trillion proposed 2023 national budget today, Aug. 22, giving it just under six weeks to pass an appropriations bill before recess, a senior legislator said.

"The budget process starts here and we want to give all House members time to scrutinize the proposed budget. I can confidently say that we can make the Sept. 30 deadline," House Majority Leader Manuel Jose M. Dalipe said at a briefing last week.

The proposed budget for next year is nearly 5% larger than the P5.02 trillion 2022 edition.

The Constitution requires President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. to "submit to the Congress within 30 days from the opening of every regular session, as the basis of the general appropriations bill

(GAB), a budget of expenditures and sources of financing, including receipts from existing and proposed revenue measures."

Marikina Rep. Stella Luz A. Quimbo said in a House statement that the Committee on Appropriations, chaired by Ako-Bicol Party-list Rep. Elizaldy S. Co, is committed to the swift approval of the propose economic recovery budget.

"Congress shall work tirelessly to approve a budget that is responsive to the needs of the people and is able to bring inclusive and sustainable growth," Ms. Quimbo, also senior vice-chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, said.

Deputy Minority Leader Bernadette Herrera said that the proposed national budget will be subjected to thorough review by the minority.

"We at the minority, assure our countrymen that the budget will pass through the eye of a needle," Ms. Herrera, of the Bagong Henerasyon party-list, said in a statement.

She also said that Minority Leader and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Projects Rep. Marcelino C. Libanan will assign each minority member a role during the budget hearings.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said in a Viber message that timely passage of the budget depends on the presence of "controversial budget items that would require more time (for adjustments) to be made by various government agencies."

"It would also be a function of any widespread support of lawmakers at both the House and the Senate as to

how it would be expedited based on urgency to approve in a more timely manner especially if certified by the President, at least to avoid delays and prevent a re-enactment of the previous year's budget," Mr. Ricafort said.

"The economy's faster growth will depend on the timely approval of the national budget. (As we have seen) in recent years (delays) in the approval of the national budget... led to slower GDP growth by about minus 1 percentage point," he said, adding that the previous administration eventually learned the downside of a delayed budget and was able to avert repeat episodes.

Mr. Ricafort said financial resources are limited due to the large debt incurred during the pandemic. — **Matthew Carl L. Montecillo**

## Safety regulations seen as 'first step' in nuclear power shift

By **Alyssa Nicole O. Tan**  
Reporter

THE Philippines is running late with its regulatory preparations for a safe nuclear power transition, the head of the Senate energy committee said.

Senator Rafael T. Tulfo said a law is needed to lay down standards for the incorporation of nuclear power companies, the construction of power plants, and the their operation.

"We have not even made a first step and we're overdue," he told *BusinessWorld* in a Viber message.

Safety standards are needed because the Philippines sits astride an area of high tectonic activity, he said, adding that disaster response capacity must be developed should anything go wrong with such plants.

According to the World Bank, the Philippines is vulnerable to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tropical cyclones, and floods, making it one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world.

"In regulating the nuclear energy sector, there must be stringent standards as to the minimum standards for facilities, minimum qualifications for the persons or entities operating it, considerations as to where and how to acquire nuclear material, contingencies in case of emergency scenarios, proper standards on nuclear fuel disposal, limitations on foreign influence in the nuclear industry, and how the LGU where the plant is situated should gain a just and equitable share of the plant's profits," he said.

Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development Executive Director Gerry Arances told *BusinessWorld* in an e-mail that it would take years to create a policy framework thorough enough to take into account all safety, environmental, and electricity price risks, and years more to build nuclear facilities.

"Even small modular reactors would take about three to five years to construct. That means nuclear energy cannot provide immediate solutions to today's energy crisis. In that span of time, renewable energy facilities

could already have been deployed," he said.

Nuclear power, Mr. Arances said, is not a solution to the climate and energy crises, adding that it does not guarantee lower electricity prices.

"The price of fuel for nuclear energy like plutonium and uranium, neither of which can be sourced domestically, will put Filipino consumers at the mercy of global market prices and vulnerable to shocks," he said. "We are already seeing this today with fossil fuel volatilities triggered by the Ukraine-Russia war."

"In developing nuclear power, the Philippines will devote time and energy to figuring out where we can source nuclear fuel, how we will manage nuclear waste, and how we can prevent the possibility of our country turning into the next Fukushima or Chernobyl," he added.

Even then, he said there is no assurance of eliminating the risk of nuclear accidents, given the country's geographic location and the intensifying climate crisis.

"Just last month, we saw the impacts of a 7.1 magnitude earthquake (which

should serve as a warning. Exposure to unpredictable seismic events should make us think twice about having a nuclear power plant," he said.

There were 10 deaths from the magnitude 7 earthquake that struck the northern Philippines, with more than 300,000 people from about 82,000 families affected, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

The earthquake also damaged more than 21,000 houses, 302 of which were destroyed, the agency said. Damage to infrastructure was about P414 million in the Ilocos region, Cagayan Valley and Cordillera Administrative Region.

Mr. Arances said time and effort should instead be channeled to effecting a 100% transition to genuinely sustainable and safe renewable energy.

"We have an abundant supply of renewable energy just waiting to be developed at an increasingly affordable cost — case in point are the winning bidders of the GEA Reserve prices, of whom the lowest bid is P3.4 per kilowatt hour from solar," he said.

### OPINION

## Embracing the power of technology beyond the COVID-19 crisis

As the pandemic slows down in many parts of the world, many companies will find that digital technology will be one of the most powerful options for recovery during this next phase of the COVID-19 crisis.

Businesses will also undertake this challenge despite severe obstacles which include inconsistent revenue, disorganized workforces, broken supply chains, and a persistent lack of investment capital.

In the Philippines, companies have been forced to adopt new business models, including managing a hybrid work environment, expanding on digital business channels, and providing customers with a more pleasant and holistic digital experience that increases engagement.

Many organizations still struggle to embrace these new technologies. Their legacy technologies have been deemed a liability as they hamper their ability to quickly adopt new and improved way of operations. As the cyberattack threat increases, they are also now more susceptible to cyber incidents as cybercriminals exploit opportunities in these newly digitized operations.

Because of the nature of this unprecedented environment, digital technologies are one of the most effective solutions for recovery. More specifically, a proactive technology strategy built around adapting operations and building resilience can equip businesses with a stronger competitive edge as they recover from the pandemic.

### ADAPTING BUSINESS OPERATIONS IN EVER-CHANGING CONDITIONS

Facing uncertainty during this pandemic is one of the greatest challenges businesses must address. The impact of COVID-19 on the economy as well as in our daily lives continues to evolve. This presents an unknown operating environment for enterprises.

The capacity to adapt to these challenges will be crucial in this new way of doing business during these ever-changing conditions. Although it will be difficult to predict how conditions may change, companies can utilize these key actions as discussed in a recent EY article on how embracing technology can bring success:

- Reevaluate infrastructure to support a hybrid workforce. This includes a flexible communications plan that supports the return-to-office situation. New infrastructure will benefit the company more in the long run by helping facilitate collaboration, remote working and

higher levels of automation in operations. Teams will be able to better manage resources, track production, and protect the enterprise through a collaborative software platform.

- To ensure business continuity, cloud adoption will help business operations transition more smoothly to support an ecosystem-based approach. This will allow more collaboration and connection among various teams that will improve decision making. Using the cloud will also allow companies to ramp up and down its supporting infrastructure as economic conditions change, linking suppliers, customers, shippers and employees to gain a flexible advantage.

- Automation remains a key pillar of any digital transformation for a business. This offers tremendous potential for leaders looking to drive transformation in their organization: from cost savings and increased delivery speed to new operating models, to higher-value efforts for their people.

### BUILDING RESILIENCY AND FLEXIBILITY INTO THE ENTERPRISE

New business models are being introduced because of the pandemic, such as hybrid work situations where employees work from home and in-office, a digital experience that boosts customer engagement, and the acceleration of digital businesses at the expense of traditional physical channels.

However, many organizations have struggled to catch up and be more digitally prepared. Traditional technologies — always high-cost and slow-moving — have become a much greater liability. Moreover, as hackers take advantage of newly digitalized activities, more companies are now frequently being targeted by cyberattacks due to their lack of adequate cyber protection.

Focusing on the following three key areas can help companies build a more resilient and flexible enterprise where digital technologies will be critical:

#### 1. Restructure IT operations

Upgrading digital infrastructure can enhance digital sales channels, the virtual customer experience and direct-to-customer delivery methods. This is evident even in the case of public services where government agencies now allow a more seamless engagement with the citizenry. For example, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) now accepts not only tax returns but also payments via electronic channels. Soon, its e-invoicing facility will expand and further

facilitate online interaction between the Bureau and the taxpayers, be it large or micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

#### 2. Reevaluate digital strategy

Now is the time to assess which new technologies the company will need to improve on, such as expanding cloud infrastructure and contactless payments and adopting 3D printing and augmented and virtual reality. In addition, companies will need to make difficult decisions around replacing legacy technologies sooner than later.

#### 3. Double down on cybersecurity

Companies should ensure that the virtual infrastructure is secure and that their data is safe and backed up. Leaders should also review their cybersecurity infrastructure and improve where necessary. Moreover, they must consider how to better support the security of third parties such as suppliers, customers and contractors. Companies should also keep in mind that strengthened security measures across its ecosystem should complement and provide a more effective defense against the current generation of security threats without slowing the business down.

### ACCELERATING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

According to a 2010 Harvard Business Review study that looked into how business fared during the 2008 recession, less than 10% of companies emerged stronger than before the crisis. They did this despite the global crisis by balancing strategic investments that focused on new technologies while cost-cutting through divestments.

With COVID-19 creating fundamental changes to how we live and work on a larger scale than in the 2008 recession, the gap will only widen between leading and underperforming companies. The successful businesses of tomorrow will be those that embrace and accelerate their digital transformation to fast-track recovery and create a competitive advantage in a post-pandemic world.

*This article is for general information only and is not a substitute for professional advice where the facts and circumstances warrant. The views and opinions expressed above are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of SGV & Co.*

WARREN R. BITUIN is the technology consulting leader of SGV & Co.



### JOB HIRING

**50 INDONESIAN LANGUAGE CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**15 MALAYSIAN CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**10 THAI CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**10 VIETNAMESE CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE**

- Must be 4 years bachelor degree graduate in any course
- At least 3 years of experience in any related fields using computer as primary job tools
- Willing to work in high pressure environment
- Great communications skills and must be fluent in Indonesian/Bahasa/Malaysian/Vietnamese/Thai and English language

#### MPOTECH Digital System Inc.

Address: 47th Floor, PBCOM Tower, 6795 Ayala Ave., cor. V.A. Rufino St., Bel-Air, Makati City  
Email: [frans.hr@ses-inc.asia](mailto:frans.hr@ses-inc.asia)

### JOB HIRING

**10 - CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**5 - TECHNICAL SUPPORT SPECIALIST**  
**5 - MARKETING MANAGER**  
**5 - SALES REPRESENTATIVE**

#### Qualifications:

- Graduate of Bachelor's/College Degree in any field
- At least 1 year of working experience in a related position
- Flexible, trustworthy and willing to work under pressure
- Proficient in speaking and writing in English & Korean Hangul
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Can work with minimum supervision

#### SNOWWIT SERVICES CORPORATION

UNIT 5D ROSE INDUSTRIES BLDG., PIONEER ST., KAPITOLYO, PASIG CITY

Please send your Resume/CV at  
Email: [snowwitservices@gmail.com](mailto:snowwitservices@gmail.com)

### JOB OPENING

**BSS ANALYST (BAHASA INDONESIA SPEAKING)**

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

- Maintain customer details in the system
- Allocate Customer's payment into their specific Accounts
- Facilitate the timely identification and resolution of Customer's Claims and Deductions
- Generate Blocked Order Report, conducts analysis in accordance with the Market's credit policies and initiates recommendations through workflow
- Conduct intensive collection activities and follow-up of overdue accounts and escalates problematic accounts to the market
- Attend to Customer's queries and ensure timely resolution of issue
- Participates in various Order to Cash Continuous Improvement initiatives

#### Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree graduate preferably with a degree in Finance Accounting
- Fluency in English and Bahasa Indonesia in a business setting is a must
- Experience in Procurement/Accounts Payable process is an advantage
- Highly analytical and self-motivated
- Assertive and proactive
- Resourceful and can work under pressure
- Can work with minimum supervision
- Excellent communications skills

#### Nestle Business Services AOA Inc.

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