

# HACKFORGOV 2023

*"Building Cyber Champions: Stronger Nation through Cyber Awareness and Action"*

## Event Briefer

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# I. BACKGROUND

## A. Rationale

As stated under Section 5 of the 2016 Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Department of Information and Communications Technology Act of 2015 (RA 1084), the department is mandated “to facilitate international cooperation on intelligence, investigations, training and capacity building related to cybercrime prevention, suppression, and prosecution.”

In 2019, DICT-CERT-PH held the first ever HackForGov Competition. This activity is primarily designed to raise the level of awareness among students on the importance of cybersecurity and provide them with hands-on experience in the various techniques used in the virtual world. The competition format is a Capture-The-Flag (CTF) event, where participants must solve a series of cybersecurity-related challenges in order to test their skills in areas such as cryptography, web security, and network security, among others.

In April 2023, the CERT-PH successfully held the Hack4Gov Kick off ceremony which was participated by universities and colleges in NCR where the winning team will represent their region in the national finals this year. The activity serves as a platform for students to showcase their abilities and develop a deeper understanding of the various cybersecurity issues and challenges faced by organizations and individuals. It also serves as a way for CERT-PH to engage with the future generation of cybersecurity professionals and encourage them to consider careers in the field. The competition provides a unique opportunity for students to learn from experts, network with peers and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

DICT recognizes that the issue of protecting sensitive data is challenging for certain agencies and for each independent individual, especially if there is a limitation in cybersecurity knowledge. Therefore, DICT aims to achieve a more informed general public so everyone can contribute to the country's fight against threats in the digital space.

## B. Objectives

Anchored on this year's theme “*Building Cyber Champions: Stronger Nation through Cyber Awareness and Action*” this undertaking is a continuous commitment of the DICT to robust the country's capacity to respond to the ever increasing and evolving cyber-attacks. This is targeted to be partaken by college students coming from different universities and colleges across the country.

This year's main goal is to increase the pace of developing cyber-proficient students and engage them to take a path in cybersecurity to increase the pool of cyber-proficient individuals and develop problem-solving skills required to identify and mitigate cybersecurity attacks. In addition, the HackForGov is also a great

opportunity to expose the students to various exercises and scenarios by providing real-world examples through the analysis of challenges.

## C. Target Venue and Participants

- The HackForGov Competition is a nationwide activity to be carried out thru regional qualifying rounds. For region \_\_\_\_& the activity will be conducted at \_\_\_\_\_
- The competition is open to **all enrolled college and university students, regardless of educational path/program.** (*25 years old and below*)

## D. Timeline of Event

## PROPOSED PROGRAM AND BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS

Regional Qualifying Rounds: Regions CAR I, II, III, IVA, IVB,V,VI, VII,VIII, X, XI, XIII Note: No. of participants varies in different regions		
DAY 0	Arrival/Ingress	
	Registration, Invocation and National Anthem	Participants:
	Opening Remarks	5 pax - CERT-PH Personnel
	Discussion of Mechanics	5 pax - Regional office Personnel
	Competition Proper	40 pax - Students (Composed of 10 teams for 4 members per team)
	Announcement of Winners and Closing Ceremonies	Total: 50

Regional Qualifying Rounds: Region IX (BaSulTa) & XII (Lanao and Maguindanao) Note: No. of participants varies in different regions		
DAY 0	Arrival/Ingress	
DAY 1	Registration, Invocation and National Anthem	Participants:
	Opening Remarks	4-5 pax - CERT-PH Personnel
	Discussion of Mechanics	5 pax - Regional office Personnel
	Competition Proper	60 pax - Students (Composed of 15 teams for 4 members per team)
	Announcement of Winners and Closing Ceremonies	Total: 70 pax

## E. How to join

### Screening/ Selection Process:

- a. The concerned region is expected to facilitate the call for participants which includes publication of events and direct coordination with the schools and organizations for sending the letter of invitation and endorsement of the list of interested applicants.
- b. Regions can endorse as 10 teams for the regional qualifying round

## II. EVENT INFORMATION

### A. Requirements

#### **Mechanics**

- a. A team shall be composed of 4 members.
- b. There will be 10 challenges for every qualifier which will vary from various categories such as forensics, cryptography, steganography, web, and misc
- c. Challenges contain a flag in the format of “flag {.....}” to be submitted to the system in order to receive points. Points given vary depending on the difficulty of the challenge.
- d. Teams will aim to complete as many challenges as they can to gain the most points
- e. Only the top scoring team in each region will have a chance to proceed to the finals.
- f. Please note that achieving the highest ranking during the qualifying rounds does not necessarily guarantee a spot in the finals as only those who have met the minimum score will advance to the final round to be held later this year.

#### **Activity Requirements**

- a. Interested applicants must submit copies of their Curriculum Vitae and Letter of intent, duly signed and endorsed by their respective schools.
- b. For the competition proper, 1 laptop per member is encouraged for each team. If not possible, a team composed of 4 members and must have 4 devices for the competition proper.
- c. Recommended laptop specifications
  - > Processor: 4.5 Ghz
  - > RAM: 8 Gb
  - > Has internet connectivity / internet-ready
- d. The activity will be held in-person/ face-to-face in the identified venue/ locations.

#### **Qualifying Rounds**

- a. Selection/Screening Process
- b. Hack4Gov Regional Qualifiers
- c. Hack4Gov National Finals

#### **Benefits**

- a. Represent your Region/School in the HackForGov Finals in Manila
- b. The winner will have a chance to compete in the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre, Cyber Sea Games 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand
- c. CERT-PH Plaque of Recognition

## **A. Methodology**

Participants will engage in in-person interactive challenges which will vary from different categories such as forensics, cryptography, steganography, web, and misc. This is a capture-the-flag (CTF) competition with the goal to immerse students in the realities of cyberspace. With the use of their laptop/ devices and collaborative skills, capture the flag competition is a computer security exercise in which "flags" are secretly hidden in purposefully-vulnerable programs or websites.

#### **\*Important Notes**

- Participants are expected to complete the exercises. This will require them to exercise various skills necessary when responding to and investigating a cyber incident.
- All instructions and guidelines shall come from the Rules of Engagement to be provided beforehand and discussed by the CERT-PH during the preliminary program.

#### **Platform**

CTF competitions simulate real-world scenarios in a gamified platform. The participants are expected to apply and exercise their incident handling, response, and reporting capabilities through the CTF format. Participants will carry out research, investigation, and analysis of the provided evidence and simulation-based scenarios. This includes determining Indicators-of-Compromise (IOCs), investigating using analysis tools, performing remediation through enhancement of security controls, and preparation of incident reports.

## **III. DRILL EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK**

- All participants are expected to fill out the CERT-PH Feedback Form that will be used to improve future related activities/

- The form will be sent out during the event.
- Only those participants who have filled out the attendance and feedback forms will receive a certificate of completion/ participation for the event.

## IV. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### **Q1. Who should attend the event?**

- HackForGov is strictly for enrolled college students only, regardless of education path/ program.

### **Q2. Do we need a team to accomplish the activity?**

- The whole activity will require teamwork.

### **Q3. Who can we contact if problems and issues are encountered during the competition?**

- There will be CERT-PH technical personnel available to assist if any problems or issues arise all throughout the event.

### **Q4. Can we allow non-registered participants to join the event?**

- No, we will not accommodate additional participants past the registration deadline as this may disrupt the event flow. Participants are required to attend the preliminary as necessary technical details about the conduct of the actual activity will be discussed by the facilitators.

### **Q5. How are we going to submit our application requirements?**

- Interested participants may submit their Curriculum Vitae together with their Letter of intent to their assigned school coordinators. For uniformity, schools may consolidate the list of applicants/teams and formally endorse the final list to the regional office via email address.

### **Q6. Is it possible to change members due to last minute adjustments?**

- Registered team names cannot be changed but teams can change members as long as they belong to the same school. Replacements are still subject to the screening process.

### **Q7. What are the expenses to be incurred during the event?**

- Travel expenses of the students to and from the venue and vice versa, shall be shouldered by their school, municipality or at their own expense.
- Meals during the event (AM and PM snacks and lunch) will be provided including registration kits, giveaways etc. Only registered participants are covered in the budget.



**Q8. Is it allowed to bring mentors/ coaches/ guardians during the event?**

- The schools/ students or their mentors/ coaches/ guardians, if any may coordinate with other organizations for possible sponsorship of travel and accommodation since the event could only accommodate the participants with meals during the activity.