



The League of Corporate Foundations' 2024 Conference and EXPO: Reimagining a New and Inclusive Future

I. Rationale of the theme

This year's theme, "Reimagining a New and Inclusive Future", takes forward the theme of the 2023 Conference and Expo, "From Extra to Essential". The importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) already having been established through helping corporates better integrate concerns of sustainability and accountability in their work, the 2023 EXPO proved the need, requirement and value of Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting by showing how it helps stakeholders understand that sustainability transcends environmental issues and also covers the social and governance aspects of their work. The 2023 EXPO revealed how CSR and ESG are two sides of the same coin: while CSR helps businesses stay true to their social commitments, ESG helps companies quantify and measure these social efforts and commitments. In short, the 2023 EXPO proved that ESG reporting must not be viewed as merely "extra" or nice-to-have by corporates, as was the case in the past, but instead is "essential" or a must-have.

The 2024 EXPO advances the 2023 theme by rooting it in the realities of a world increasingly focused on technology as a driver of change to help it progress past the remnants of the pandemic, as well as persistent societal challenges that date from well before COVID-19 struck. While technology has its promise, it also brings risk and potential disruptions that may disproportionately affect more vulnerable members of society. The 2024 EXPO will show how the application of CSR and ESG can help mitigate these challenges—and, by doing so, help ensure that these technologies are *inclusive* and contribute to true societal and national development.

II. Technology and collaboration for impact and inclusivity

While cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) do possess the potential to revolutionize society, they also pose significant risks.

Inclusivity is a key concern, especially in the Philippines. Our society may not benefit equally from these technological advancements. For one, given that these innovations threaten to make many existing occupations obsolete, especially those at the lower end of the income and skill spectrum, the most vulnerable may be disproportionately affected in terms of livelihood, health, food security, well-being, and so on. These innovations may also raise questions and concerns regarding key issues such as creativity and intellectual property infringements, misinformation and disinformation, digital privacy and transparency, social discrimination and bias, and surveillance.

The League's stand is that technological innovations can be properly harnessed, such that their ill effects upon society can be mitigated—and that technology offers an abiding opportunity for corporate collaboration, whether between corporates or with other sectors, to achieve monumental and lasting impact upon societal challenges both new and old.

Corporates should view these innovations as vital opportunities to take part in, if not lead, all-of-nation implementations of CSR and ESG that maximize these innovations' potential and promise while offsetting and minimizing their potential ill effects. These approaches must work to ensure that the application of technology is aligned with the fundamental principles of CSR and ESG, and, by doing so, is made *inclusive* and contributes to social sustainability and the common good.

The League is therefore focusing on technology as the topic of the 2024 EXPO, given the promise it holds as a “rallying point” for corporates that want to help bring about societal change and national development; actors in the social development space which are already immersed in this work; and technology firms, to come together and co-create solutions that will achieve meaningful and collective impact, especially for those who need it most.

III. LCF: focused on collaboration towards national development

LCF is an organization and network of 95 corporate foundations and corporations across the Philippines. It is dedicated to the promotion and advancement of CSR in the country. Established in 1991, LCF was founded with the ambitious goal of becoming a driving force for businesses to collaborate with communities, partner institutions, and governments to achieve equitable and sustainable development.

Since having being registered with the SEC in 1996, LCF has been actively advocating for responsible CSR practice among its members and the broader business community, recognizing it as a powerful business, economic, and development tool to address social issues nationwide. Throughout its history, LCF has encouraged and facilitated joint programs, activities, and projects among its members, government, non-government organizations, and other private sectors. This collaboration has resulted in positive outcomes for the social welfare of communities across the nation.

IV. The EXPO: a venue for cross-sectoral collaboration

Since 1991, LCF has been a champion in building a network of corporations, their corporate foundations, and business organizations. It has worked to steer their initiatives to better contribute to national economic and development goals. This paved the way for the establishment of CSR Week in the Philippines, which is celebrated on the first week of July by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 299, s. 2000. The CSR Expo is organized annually every July as a culmination of the celebration of CSR Week.

The first CSR EXPO in 2001 was a watershed event that strengthened the role of the Philippine business community as a partner of civil society and government in effecting positive change. Since its inception, thousands of representatives of both corporate and private foundations, the private sector, non-government organizations, civil society, the academe, and government agencies have networked, learned and collaborated at the various EXPOs held over the years.

The 2024 Conference will take place from July 3-4, 2024, and will be held at the Dusit Thani Manila, Makati City. Plenary and break-out parallel sessions will accord participants opportunities to understand relevant concepts and trends in technology, CSR and ESG, and at the same time network and discuss among themselves. We expect over 200 participants to attend this year’s Conference. Member-delegates will also be able to attend the CSR Guild Awards (to be held in the afternoon of July 3 at the Dusit Thani Manila), LCF's annual recognition program that spotlights outstanding CSR programs and collaborative efforts from the previous year.

The EXPO will be held from July 4-5 at the Glorietta Activity Center in Glorietta Mall, Makati City. It will highlight exemplary CSR initiatives undertaken by LCF members, and will also recognize noteworthy CSR initiatives organized by non-members. This year’s EXPO will accommodate at least 50 exhibitors and will also showcase activities to draw in the non-profit and social enterprise sector, government, the academe, the youth / students, foreign offices and the various chambers of commerce.