

# Companies must take proactive approach in using generative AI

ORGANIZATIONS must be proactive about the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) to help manage its accompanying risks, analysts said.

"For organizations or individuals who have access to the new capabilities, it simply opens up new ways for them to prompt responses and interact with the chatbot," Ralph Vincent J. Regalado, chief executive officer and founder of Senti AI, a local AI solutions and services company, said in an interview.

"Perhaps ChatGPT's new updates will allow more Filipinos to become well-versed in using AI-powered tools. But of course, some discretion is still needed to avoid misuse and abuse of these technologies," he added.

This comes after ChatGPT on Monday announced that it will soon have voice and image capabilities for a more intuitive user experience.

ChatGPT creator OpenAI will roll out the multimedia features of its chatbot to its premium users over the next two weeks, it said in a Sept. 25 post.

Voice will be available on smartphones and images will be available on all ChatGPT platforms soon after, it added.

"The most exciting thought for me would be brainstorming with ChatGPT in the room," Ria Ysabelle Flora, a power solutions lead of a data science startup, said on the new voice and image features of the platform.

"You now gain another team member to throw ideas via text, voice, or image, and engage in ideation and collaborative work. However, the caveat here is that you and your human team members should be knowledgeable enough to scope out its hallucinations and its substantial output," she added.

She emphasized the importance of prompt engineering in

response to reliability issues to "provide enough information that it may operate and provide the closest and most substantial output for you."

While generative AI can help simplify administrative tasks, it could have adverse effects on important sectors like education, Ms. Flora said.

"I am generally optimistic about it, but it would be a matter of making sure that we have sufficient policies and regulations to mitigate its effects to our systems," she said.

"We should likewise caveat that too much regulation may lead to curtailing the growth and speed of its development. I think finding the sweet spot in between would be the biggest challenge for policy makers, as nations around the world are now challenged to take a pivot and be more proactive and innovative," Ms. Flora added.

## GENERATIVE AI FOR BUSINESSES

Mr. Regalado said there could be several uses for generative AI in companies, such as "speeding up the creation of marketing copies and publishing materials, crunching data at breakneck speed to extract more insights at less time and effort, and providing improved, more conversational customer service."

"Decision makers have to identify the best use case that applies to them. Identify the pain points or bottlenecks in their operations and consider if it's worth being remedied by AI," he said.

"Since the technology is new, companies can engage in building pilot projects first so they can measure value and impact on their organizations. Getting ahead is proven to help increase business differentiation making businesses be ahead of their competitors," Mr. Regalado added. — **M.H.L. Antivola**

## Girls avoid internet due to abuse and bias, report warns

DEEPLY entrenched gender norms, biases, and perceptions are affecting the ability of girls and young women to use the internet, influencing their online activity and hurting their access to information and work, a new report has found.

A survey of more than 10,000 users aged 14-21, and their parents, in over half-a-dozen countries including Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and India, found that girls are constantly being monitored and told they are vulnerable and not competent online, "creating a crisis of confidence."

"This is resulting in girls setting up more protections and behaving more conservatively when connecting with others and sharing personal information online," said the report by nonprofit Girl Effect, the Malala Fund, the United Nations' children's agency United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Vodafone Americas Foundation.

"These attitudes are not just impacting girls' access and usage, they are influencing their self-confidence and shaping their own perceptions of their ability to use these tools to pursue their social, educational, and intellectual interests," said the report.

The gender digital divide has persisted despite efforts by governments worldwide. A UNICEF study earlier this year showed that in 54 countries, the median gender parity ratio is 71, meaning that for every 100 adolescent boys and young men who use the internet, only 71 adolescent girls and young women do.

At the same time, women experience more online abuse,

and harassment is driving girls to quit social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, recent studies have found.

Among digitally connected youth, 12% more girls than boys said that they feel self-conscious while using social media, and are 11% less likely to post photos or comments online compared to boys of the same age, the report by Girl Effect found.

## VICIOUS CYCLE

As girls' exposure to the internet is restricted by biases and fear of abuse, they do not see themselves as tech-savvy, and do not see the internet as something that is for them, the report from Girl Effect said.

"This creates a vicious cycle whereby girls avoid tech because they don't think it's for them, and then tech is seen as 'not for them' because they have been avoiding it," it said.

As teenagers who scrutinize, regulate, and limit their behavior online, women "often carry these traits to their workplace, where they face difficulties in demonstrating their skills and building strategic connections," said Mitali Nikore, a gender policy specialist at research group Nikore Associates.

"This negatively affects women's behaviour at workplaces, constraining their labour market opportunities

and professional advancement... and their access to potential sources of revenue-generating activities," Nikore told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. — **Thomson Reuters Foundation**

## HONOR launches new budget phones, tablet

SMART devices brand HONOR on Tuesday launched its latest range of budget smartphones and a new tablet in the Philippines, including the 90 Lite 5G, Pad X9, and additions to its X series.

The new lineup of products is targeted towards students and professionals looking for all-rounded devices at affordable prices, HONOR Philippines said.

"Innovation is about enriching lives," Paulo Oga, public relations manager at HONOR Philippines, said at the launch event on Tuesday.

"The devices we have launched in 2023 are a testament to our dedication in providing leading edge technology that empowers and inspires," he added. "We will go even further and beyond in 2024."

The 90 Lite 5G features a 6.7-inch display with 90Hz refresh rate. It has a 4,500mAh battery, 8GB+5GB of RAM, and a 100-megapixel main camera.

Joepy Libo-on, brand marketing manager at HONOR Philippines, said the phone is "paired with a large 256GB storage that is very rare for [its] price range."

The 90 Lite 5G retails at P12,990.

Meanwhile, the Pad X9 has a 11.5-inch display with 120Hz refresh rate. It is powered by a Qualcomm Snapdragon 685 processor and a 7,250mAh battery, alongside a six-speaker audio system and 128GB of storage capacity.

Stephen Cheng, HONOR Philippines vice-president, said the tablet "combines best-in-class display, incredible audio system, and massive storage for a guaranteed superb entertainment and educational experience."

It is priced at P11,990.

The additions to the HONOR X series, the X6a and the X5

Plus, both feature a 90Hz 6.56-inch display, 5,200mAh battery, 50-megapixel camera, and expandable storage.

The X6a features a 50-megapixel triple camera system, while the X5 Plus has 50-megapixel dual cameras.

"By making our quality products more affordable, we make technology more accessible to every Filipino out there," Mr. Cheng said.

The X6a costs P6,990, while the X5 Plus is priced at P5,990.

The new HONOR devices are available for pre-order at the brand's partner stores and online with selected freebies and discounts. — **MHLA**

# HONOR



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## Filinvest REIT secures EDGE certification for six Grade A properties

LISTED Filinvest REIT Corp. (FILRT) has secured the Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies (EDGE) certification for six of its properties as part of the company's push for sustainable development.

In a regulatory filing on Wednesday, FILRT said the six EDGE-certified buildings are Vector One, Vector Two, Filinvest Two, Filinvest Three, Plaza A, and Plaza D, which are all located in Northgate Cyberzone, Muntinlupa City. The certifications were awarded on Sept. 22.

The EDGE-certified buildings, which are Grade A and Philippine Economic Zone Authority-accredited, represent 33% of FILRT's nationwide office portfolio in terms of leasable area.

EDGE is a green building standard and certification developed by International Finance Corp. (IFC), which is a member of the World Bank Group. The certification helps property developers to build and brand "green" developments in a fast, easy, and affordable manner.

"Through our commitment to outstanding design and sustainability, FILRT proudly celebrates the recognition of our six EDGE-certified properties. These buildings, comprising a significant portion of our nationwide portfolio, showcase our vision to grow a trusted portfolio of sustainable commercial properties that enriches the lives and well-being of

our community," FILRT President and Chief Executive Officer Maricel Brion-Lirio said.

Northgate Cyberzone is an 18.7-hectare information technology zone. In 2001, IFC provided a \$22 million loan to Filinvest Land, Inc. to assist in the development of Northgate Cyberzone.

"Within six months, FILRT's six properties emerged as EDGE-certified, with an average consumption of 25% less energy, 39% less water, and 55% less embodied energy in embodied materials compared to other buildings in the Philippines. This was accomplished without any retrofitting work," FILRT said.

Meanwhile, FILRT said it is seeking to secure EDGE certification for 74% of its projects in about two years based on its current office portfolio, to increase the target to about 67% in the next six months.

"Locators at these prime FILRT properties possess a distinct and key competitive advantage, validated by a third party, in operational efficiency and environmental sustainability," FILRT said.

FILRT's net income dropped 20.5% to P561 million in the first half from P706 million a year ago. The company is the real estate investment trust of Filinvest Land.

On Wednesday, shares of FILRT at the local bourse rose one centavo or 0.33% to close at P3.01 apiece. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

## SEC and BIR to scrutinize corporations' data on beneficial ownership to support tax enforcement

THE Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has partnered with the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) in a plan to look into corporations' beneficial ownership in tax enforcement.

In a statement on Wednesday, the SEC said beneficial ownership data could be used to promote tax integrity by revealing individuals who ultimately control legal entities.

The corporate regulator conducted a focus group discussion on Sept. 22, participated by BIR officials, which sought to facilitate cooperation in using beneficial ownership data to boost tax integrity and transparency.

According to the SEC, a beneficial owner is a natural person who

"ultimately owns or exercises ultimate effective control over a corporation."

Different from legal owners, that person might directly or indirectly have the power to vote or influence a company's transaction decisions even without being reported as a stockholder, member, director, or officer.

Under SEC Memorandum Circular No. 15, series of 2019, the commission mandates the declaration of beneficial owners in the general information sheet, a required document submitted by corporate entities.

"Taxation is an important element of ensuring the economic stability of a nation," SEC Chairperson Emilio B. Aquino said.

Meanwhile, the SEC said in a separate statement that it partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Open Ownership to tap the potential of using beneficial ownership data to fight corruption in the government procurement process.

On Aug. 31, the SEC and UNODC organized a focus group discussion on beneficial ownership data use in public procurement. The activity was participated by officers from the Philippine Competition Commission, House of Representatives, Office of the President, Office of the Ombudsman, Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System, and Government Procurement Policy Board Technical Support Office (GPPB-TSO).

The discussions focused on the application of beneficial ownership in public procurement, highlighting the importance of data in mitigating corruption and improving the decision-making process of the procurement cycle.

"Beneficial ownership plays an important role in detecting indicators of bid rigging and conflicts of interest during the procurement process," Mr. Aquino said.

"As such, it is important that we ensure there are few avenues for corrupt individuals to take advantage of the system," he added.

In 2022, the SEC and GPPB-TSO signed a data-sharing agreement to improve public procurement and beneficial ownership transparency. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

## Citicore Renewable seals supply contract with CEDC

CITICORE Renewable Energy Corp. (CREC) said on Wednesday that it had forged a contract with Clark Electric Distribution Corp. (CEDC) to supply the latter with 7.5 megawatts (MW) of power.

In a media release, CREC said the power supply agreement with CEDC is through its local retail electricity supplier (LRES) arm Cogent Energy, which will source energy supply from the company's solar power plants in Tarlac City.

The contract is effective until December 2024, or upon commercial operations of CREC's upcoming Bato Solar Power Plant in Palauig, Zambales, it said.

The partnership will transition into a 10-year power supply contract once the solar power plant is operational to provide 30 MW of CEDC LRES' electricity needs.

"Our partnership with CEDC, among others, is another step in Citicore's continued commitment to support the government in their renewable



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energy transition target," said CREC Executive Vice-President Manolo T. Candelaria.

"We're very excited and honored to have CEDC join our growing list of long-term partners," he said, as he thanked CEDC for trusting the Citicore group.

Cogent Energy Officer-in-Charge Manager Erickson Montes said the partnership would help the government achieve its goal of increasing renewable energy share in the country's energy mix to 35% by 2030 and 50% by 2040.

He said the retail energy supplier would help make the Department of Energy's aspiration happen "through our partnership with Citicore, a well-known renewable energy supplier in the Philippines."

He also said that the long-term partnership would help the company reach its "dream of being the best renewable energy supplier" not only in the Clark Freeport Zone but also in Central and Northern Luzon.

CREC President and Chief Executive Officer Oliver Y. Tan has said that the company is targeting to conduct an initial public offering next year and is preparing the necessary registration statement.

With CREC's current installed capacity of 284 MW, Mr. Tan said the company is planning to roll out a total of 1,000 MW of new solar projects that will come online before the end of 2024 to bring its total installed capacity to 1.3 gigawatts. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**