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Future Economy Conference 2026: Technology, Talent and Trust Take Centre Stage as Businesses Tackle Shifting Global Priorities

As Singapore navigates a volatile global landscape, the launch of VolunteerInc. marks a decisive step toward integrating social sustainability into the corporate core - bridging the gap between intent and impact to ensure that economic resilience is built on a foundation of strong community trust.

14 May 2026, 12pm (Thursday) [Singapore]

As businesses navigate heightened global uncertainty, slower growth, and structural shifts in trade, technology, and manpower, the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) convened over 1,500 business leaders, policymakers and industry partners at the Future Economy Conference (FEC) 2026 to examine how Singapore enterprises can remain competitive, resilient and trusted in an increasingly complex operating environment.

2. Centred on the theme “Building a Future-Ready Singapore: Technology | Talent | Trust”, the two-day conference focused on how national economic strategy can be translated into practical business priorities. Discussions covered the opportunities and challenges shaping Singapore’s next phase of growth, including technology adoption, workforce transformation, business resilience and trusted partnerships across the economy.

3. **Mr Kok Ping Soon, Chief Executive Officer, SBF**, emphasised that the conference was designed to help businesses move from broad strategy to practical action. “As global conditions become more uncertain and transitions accelerate, businesses need more than resilience. They need clarity on where the economy is heading and what it means for their decisions today. The Future Economy Conference provides a platform for businesses to engage these issues directly, align on priorities, and turn longer-term strategy into practical outcomes,” said Mr Kok.

Day 1 – Charting the Path: Release of ESR Final Recommendations & Ministerial Dialogue

4. A key highlight of Day 1 was the release of the final recommendations by the Economic Strategy Review (ESR) by **Mr Gan Kim Yong, Deputy Prime Minister (DPM), Minister for Trade and Industry, and Chairman of the Singapore Economic Resilience Taskforce (SERT)**. The ESR recommendations set out a forward-looking economic strategy for Singapore to secure economic growth and create good jobs and opportunities, to ensure Singapore continues to thrive amidst global structural shifts.

5. Building on these themes, the Ministerial Dialogue with **Mr Jeffrey Siow, Acting Minister for Transport and Senior Minister of State for Finance**, provided further insights into the formulation of the ESR recommendations, which were shaped by extensive consultations with industry and stakeholders.

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Day 2 – Launch of VolunteerInc.: Over 50 partner companies deployed 500 employees to volunteer

6. The second day of FEC marked the official launch of **VolunteerInc.** by **Mr. David Neo, Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth & Senior Minister of State for Education.** This programme underscores a vital message: even amidst economic headwinds, businesses play a key role in contributing to broader social outcomes to strengthen the conditions that sustain growth. The programme has already gained significant momentum, with **over 50 partner companies**, including Coface and Cook Medical, deploying **some 500 employees** to volunteer in the community over the past nine months. Looking ahead, VolunteerInc. aims to engage 600 companies and 6,000 employees by 2030.

7. Established through a strategic collaboration between the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) and the SBF, with support from SBF Foundation, VolunteerInc. is a corporate volunteering programme with a structured means for businesses to embed volunteering into their organisational strategies. The programme addresses findings from SBF's inaugural [Social Sustainability and Corporate Volunteering Study](#) which reveals that 9 in 10 local businesses surveyed embrace social sustainability but struggle with high-impact implementation. To bridge this gap, VolunteerInc. will provide hands-on support, training, and connections to community organisations in need through a robust ecosystem of digital platforms, impact advisors, and learning resources designed to track and measure social engagement.

8. More details on VolunteerInc. and company profiles are in [Annex A](#).

Other Key Highlights

9. At the FEC, panel discussions took a more grounded examination of how organisations are transitioning from AI experimentation to measurable enterprise impact. Speakers from across government, industry and academia, unpacked the practical barriers that continue to slow this shift, particularly around data readiness, governance frameworks, and the organisational change required to embed AI at scale across functions rather than in isolated pilots. The conversations also broadened to the macro environment, exploring how companies are responding to ongoing global volatility and structural constraints as they attempt to scale beyond the startup stage. Within this context, participants highlighted the increasingly difficult balancing act between sustaining long-term commitments to sustainability and managing short-term cost pressures, especially in uncertain economic conditions.

10. Participants also gained first-hand insights into how companies such as ST Engineering, SMRT and Tong Seng Produce are implementing future-ready initiatives through the Future Ready Business (FRB) Spotlight visits. These curated sessions offered a closer look at how organisations are adapting and innovating in response to emerging challenges, showcasing practical examples of capability building and how strategies are translated into tangible outcomes.

11. Kindly refer to [Annex B](#) for further highlights of the FEC.

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Our Sponsors and Partners

12. This year's edition is made possible by the following partners, with support from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Economic Development Board, Enterprise Singapore and the Infocomm Media and Development Authority – each bringing valuable industry expertise to strengthen the FEC's role as a key platform for advancing public-private dialogue and driving Singapore's future-ready economic agenda:

- (i) Platinum Partners: OCBC and Mastercard
- (ii) Knowledge Partner: EY Singapore
- (iii) Gold Partners: HSBC, Kuok Group, NCS, Pacific International Lines, PSA [*Refer to Annex C for partner quotes*]
- (iv) Bronze Partners: BIPO, softScheck and Certis as Bronze Partners
- (v) Marketplace Partners: VGC Technology, Knovel Engineering, AvePoint Singapore, Audicodes, AiRTS, ICONZ-Webvisions, SAP and Straits Interactive

13. **Mr Samuel Lee, Head of Global Wholesale Banking Modernisation & Digital Transformation, OCBC**, said: "While technological change has always been a constant for businesses, the challenge today lies in translating technological advancements — especially in AI — into enterprise-wide impact that delivers a competitive and operational advantage. To build a winning proposition and differentiate themselves, businesses must focus on how digital innovation is applied, scaled, and embedded into core operations. At OCBC, our approach is anchored in strong data foundations and digital capabilities that enhance customer journeys, with AI embedded thoughtfully and responsibly into core processes. We are committed to supporting businesses in solving real needs and delivering meaningful outcomes through digitalisation, to drive sustainable growth and long-term resilience."

14. "Mastercard is pleased to support the Future Economy Conference, which comes at a critical moment as businesses move beyond AI experimentation and into real-world deployment. While leading technology, strong operating models and talent are essential to compete, the true catalyst for scaling AI is trust — embedded from the start. This is where Mastercard can play a meaningful role in supporting Singapore's journey towards a future-ready economy," said **Dr Peter Robejsek, Executive Vice President, Market Development, Asia Pacific, Mastercard**.

15. EY is the Knowledge Partner for the Future Economy Conference for the second year. **Mr. Liew Nam Soon, Singapore Managing Partner, Ernst & Young LLP, also EY Asia East Deputy Regional Managing Partner and Asean Managing Partner**, said: "With geopolitical uncertainty, economic restructuring, and AI reshaping every sector, businesses need actionable pathways to build resilient growth with confidence. The Future Economy Conference is a timely forum, focusing on what matters most now—scaling AI responsibly, developing future-ready skills, and delivering growth, innovation, and social value. Singapore is well positioned for this shift, with sustained national digitalisation efforts, world-class digital infrastructure, and a strong push to build AI capabilities across industries. As Knowledge Partner, we aim to leverage our experience supporting clients through complex transformation programmes to help the broader enterprise ecosystem gain lasting competitive advantage."



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About Singapore Business Federation

Singapore Business Federation (SBF) is the apex business chamber with over 32,000 members across diverse industries. With a vision to advance Singapore towards a globally competitive and sustainable economy, SBF mobilises the business community to be future-ready and magnify transformation opportunities through policy advocacy, partnership platforms and capability programmes.