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## Industry-led Efforts on River and Lake Rehabilitation – The “Sacred” Experience in Laguna De Bay

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Environmentally aware industries have a big potential to serve as partners in efforts to revive the tributary rivers of Laguna de Bay. Aside from resources and technical knowledge on water quality improvement, companies are also able to apply management principles in running a volunteer organization and mobilizing partners from the community and other stakeholders. It also helps if a company has a good environmental performance and a good corporate image, so it can attract people to be involved in the group's efforts and projects on river and lake rehabilitation.

SaCRED is San Cristobal River Enhancement Defenders, one of the Laguna de Bay River Councils, initially formed by LLDA in March 2000. SaCRED's vision is to be a multi-sector organization working harmoniously with communities, industries, government and other stakeholders committed to achieve the continuous improvement of San Cristobal River basin's environment quality for sustainable development.

In September 2000 the initial 30 company members elected Bayer CropScience (BCS) to lead this organization. BCS is a multinational company with headquarters in Germany - the world's leading innovative crop science company involved in crop protection, seeds and green biotechnology as well as non agricultural pest control. Environmental protection is topmost in the company's policy. A staunch supporter of sustainable agriculture, BCS practices responsible care as a tool towards sustainable development. Responsible Care: For Ourselves, For our Partners and For our Future is the company's long term commitment.

Under this continuous improvement program on health, safety and the environment, BCS has committed to work for the rehabilitation of San Cristobal

River, and to participate in lake wide rehabilitation efforts for Laguna de Bay with the Federation of River Basin Councils in the area.

Other members and stakeholders from the community help achieve the objectives of SaCRED. The organization conducts monitoring of river water quality, solid waste management seminars in the community, river clean-ups, tree planting, environmental advocacy and awareness campaigns. One of its major activities is environmental values training for high school students in the area. YES (Young Environmental Stewards) program aims to develop a core of young environmentally aware stewards/leaders from the area who are endowed with the knowledge and values needed to care of their environment, specially their rivers, and could act as agents of change. SaCRED strongly believes that the much needed improvement in our environment should be spearheaded by our YOUTH, armed with proper education and environmental values.

SaCRED works on its objectives through a lot of networking with member industries, and with government and non government organizations, schools, local government units, media, environment consultants and other stakeholders- to enhance, multiply and duplicate its efforts on river and lake protection. It is only through intensive public – private partnership led by industry that SaCRED is able to move forward in the daunting task of rehabilitating San Cristobal River, and ultimately Laguna de Bay - “Everyone doing his small part, to ultimately create a high positive impact on lake water quality.” This is how SaCRED works.