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ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT: A CASE STUDY OF APTIV

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Purpose: Sustainable development has become a critical goal for organizations worldwide, with an increasing focus on environmental, social, and economic responsibilities. Companies are now expected not only to achieve financial success but also to contribute positively to the well-being of society and the environment. In this context, Aptiv, a global technology company, stands out as a beacon of sustainable development. This article explores how Aptiv integrates sustainable practices into its operations, with a particular emphasis on Organizational Alignment and the Theory of Planned Behavior. By examining Aptiv's sustainability documentation, authors delve into how the company addresses various aspects of sustainable development and aligns with specific United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). **Design/methodology/approach**: The research employs case study and company documents analysis to understand structural and perceptual aspects of Organizational Alignment in reaching SDGs.

Findings: The findings suggest that aligning organizational structures with SDGs, coupled with a comprehensive understanding of planned behavior factors, can serve as a strategic approach for fostering successful sustainability initiatives within organizations. This dual approach addresses both the structural and behavioral aspects, offering a more holistic framework for achieving sustainable development objectives.

Research limitations/implications: Research limitation lies in single source case study, suggesting the need for broader research encompassing a more extensive range of organizations. Future studies should consider both the size and the industry-specific characteristics of organizations to enhance the generalizability of findings.

Practical implications: The case study serves as a blueprint, demonstrating how successful organizations strategically integrate sustainability practices to achieve tangible and impactful results.

Originality/value: This paper contributes novelty by addressing a research gap through its focus on a limited number of case studies detailing specific organizations' successful implementation of SDGs. Its value lies in providing actionable insights and strategic guidance for organizations aiming to effectively integrate SDGs, particularly suitable for those seeking practical examples and success stories in the realm of sustainability initiatives.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Organizational Alignment, Theory of Planned Behavior.

Category of the paper: Case study.

1. Introduction

The natural environment is constantly being polluted by the activities of the construction industry and the built environment as a whole. Likewise, finite natural resources that are used as raw materials for construction are increasingly being depleting due to continuous extraction. Waste generation resulting from human activities during construction is also on the rise, with little effort being made to minimize it (Ogunmakinde, 2022). In September 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted a global plan of action for sustainable development named "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", with a broad scope incorporating 'Five P's' namely, planet, people, prosperity, peace, partnership. The 2030 Agenda is a global scheme incorporating 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 related targets addressing global challenges of climate change, social inequality and environmental degradation. The SDGs call for worldwide action among governments, businesses and civil society organizations to achieve shared and sustainable prosperity (Khaled, 2021).

The motivation for organizations to adopt sustainable development practices is multifaceted, encompassing environmental responsibility, regulatory compliance, financial considerations, and the recognition of the interconnectedness between business success and broader societal and environmental well-being. Organizations recognize the finite nature of many resources and the importance of using them efficiently. Sustainable development practices aim to minimize resource consumption, reduce waste, and ensure the responsible use of natural resources. By doing so, organizations contribute to the long-term availability of resources. Adopting sustainable practices is driven by the desire to mitigate the environmental impact of business operations (Yadaf, 2022). Organizations acknowledge their role in contributing to pollution and environmental degradation. Sustainable practices, such as waste reduction, eco-friendly manufacturing processes, and emissions controls, are implemented to minimize negative effects on the environment (Al-Shetwi, 2022). Increasingly stringent environmental regulations and standards require organizations to comply with specific sustainability measures. Adhering to these regulations not only helps avoid legal consequences but also demonstrates a commitment to responsible corporate citizenship (Bengo, 2022). Consumers and investors are placing a growing emphasis on corporate social responsibility. Organizations that demonstrate a commitment to Sustainable Development practices often enjoy enhanced reputation and trust among stakeholders. This positive perception can lead to increased customer loyalty and investor confidence (Fallah, 2022). Sustainable practices often go hand in hand with increased efficiency. For example, energy-efficient processes not only reduce environmental impact but also result in cost savings for the organization. Adopting sustainable technologies and practices can lead to long-term financial benefits (Zakari, 2022). Organizations recognize that environmental and social risks can impact their operations.

By integrating sustainable practices, they aim to mitigate these risks and build resilience against potential disruptions (Wang, 2022). This includes considering the impacts of climate change, supply chain disruptions, and reputational risks associated with unsustainable practices. Sustainability challenges present opportunities for innovation. Organizations that invest in sustainable technologies and solutions may gain a competitive advantage by tapping into emerging markets for green products and services. This fosters a culture of innovation within the organization (Aftab, 2022). Sustainable development practices are viewed as essential for ensuring the long-term viability of businesses. Organizations recognize that a focus on short-term gains at the expense of environmental and social considerations is not sustainable in the long run (Andersson, 2022). By integrating sustainable practices, they aim to build resilience and future-proof their operations.

In the literature, there is a research gap regarding how the private sector implements SDGs at the organizational level. In this paper, we analyze case study of Aptiv, one of the most sustainable companies in the automotive sector. This case study highlights: the key strategies that Aptiv has employed in engaging employees to achieve SDG, and how Aptiv integrates sustainable practices into its operations. These findings underscore the value of the SDGs as a common language in employees engagement and offer practical implications for the private sector to contribute meaningfully to the shared global agenda.

2. Literature review

Organizational Alignment is a crucial aspect of management because it influences an organization's ability to achieve goals, adapt to changes, maintain consistency in actions, and build coherence across different areas of the organization (Aldalimy, 2019). It may involve adjusting the organizational structure, human resource management, communication, strategic objectives, and many other elements to create a coherent and integrated whole (Conway, Andrews, 2020). According to Lumineau and Malhotra (2020) when the structural conditions of an organization is attractive and it has the resources and capabilities to carve out a viable competitive position, the structural alignment approach is likely to lead to better performance. Saffold (2019) points out that a solid culture has nearly been utilized as a main impetus to support the confidence of laborers and to improve employee self-confidence and engagement, reducing work stress and improving employee ethical behavior. The capacity to recognize the organization's cultural characteristics offers a platform for a better comprehension of the organization's activities including those which are connected to Sustainable Development (Anamanjia, 2022).

To emphasize key processes and identify best practices for the case study, this paper comes with a discussion on Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). TPB (Ajzen, 1991) posits that an individual's behavior is influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The main assumptions of Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior are: (a) attitude toward the behavior: where individuals make subjective evaluations of a given behavior. These attitudes include positive or negative assessments of the consequences of the behavior and subjective values attributed to these consequences, (b) subjective norms: these are subjective evaluations, or an individual's beliefs about whether important people in their social environment (e.g., friends, family, co-workers, employees, leaders) approve or disapprove of a particular behavior. Subjective norms also include the individual's willingness to conform to these evaluations, and (c) perceived behavioral control: this involves assessments of whether an individual believes they have sufficient control over a given behavior. It considers whether they can control it, whether there may be obstacles, and what their skills are in controlling the behavior. These three factors (attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) influence an individual's intention to engage in a particular behavior. These intentions, in turn, are considered direct precursors to actual behavior. Since its development almost three decades ago, the TPB has frequently been applied to understand the factors underlying various pro environmental behaviors (Yuriew, 2020): the use of alternative transportation (Ali, 2023), waste recycling (Ma, 2023), saving water (Si, 2022), energy conservation (Duong, 2023) or low carbon consumption (Jiang et al., 2019; Liu, 2022).

The United Nations Agenda 2030 (United Nation, 2015) for Sustainable Development, signed by all United Nation Member States, consists of 17 goals and 169 targets representing shared environmental, social, and economic aspirations commonly referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With less than one decade left to achieve the SDGs and implement the 2030 Agenda, the United Nation called this period the "decade of action" and committed to mobilize financing, enhance national implementation, and bolster local action (Bandari, 2022). The adoption of the 2030 Agenda has demonstrated the need to change existing priorities for organizations, from quantifying economic growth at any cost to recognizing and rewarding sustainable economic development (Cojocaru, 2022). In general, sustainability refers to creating a condition that human and nature can co-exist in a productive harmony that allows the socioeconomic development of the current and future generations (Nodehi, 2021). The literature of sustainability development proposes three different perspective for sustainable development: a) strong sustainability, b) weak sustainability, and c) health-centered or social sustainability (Parsa, 2019). Each can propose a special and distinctive strategy for the development of transportation infrastructure, since each perspective sustainability assumes different importance to each pillar of sustainable development e.g., social, environmental, and economic (Taghvaee, 2021). Studies are increasingly focusing on assessing the interactions among specific SDGs (Van Soest et al., 2019). A exploration was conducted by mapping interactions between SDG 14 (i.e., life below water) and other SDGs (Dawes, 2022).

Biglari et al. (2022) undertook a study based on published evidence around interactions between SDG 7 (i.e., affordable and clean energy) and other SDGs. UN (2017) developed a comprehensive methodology to assess relationships between clean water and sanitation (SDG 6) and other SDGs using a systems thinking approach. A report by the International Council for Science (ICSU, 2017) evaluated key interactions between the targets of SDG 2 (i.e., zero hunger), SDG 3 (i.e., good health and well-being), SDG 7, and SDG 14 with other SDGs using a seven-point scale, without accounting for geographical context. Turcson et al. (2020) conducted a systematic assessment between SDG 7 targets and other SDGs by reviewing energy-related literature and assessing context dependencies. In addition to these studies, Anderson et al. (2022) discussed efforts towards SDGs 5 (Gender Equality) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) which may accelerate progress, while SDGs 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) were shown to create potential hurdles. Some studies have taken a more comprehensive approach to assessing SDG interactions, focusing at the global (Anderson et al., 2022) and national scales (Horal et al., 2022).

3. Methodology

A case study approach was employed. A case study (Glinka, Czakon, 2021) is a method of solving a cognitive problem, and its main intention is to understand the circumstances of the occurrence of phenomena, discover their causes, and the direction of dependencies between them. Yin (2009) recommends using the case study method to find answers to questions of an exploratory nature, thus addressing "how" and "why" a given phenomenon occurs. Such scientific research focuses more on a profound understanding of the phenomenon than on the analysis of variables. Therefore, the application of the case study method allows for discovering what quantitative research results can only suggest. Compared to other research methods, case studies offer the richest range of techniques and tools for data acquisition and analysis. Sources of data may include observations, interviews, company documents, press articles, surveys, databases maintained by various institutions. There are also no methodological limitations regarding the way data is analyzed. For this paper The Sustainability Progress Report (2023); Environmental, Health, Safety and Energy Policy (2022); Annual Report (2022), company documents retrieved from the company's website (www.aptiv.com), and official press releases were used for the analysis, and to characterize the organization. Conclusions drawn based on a case study method aligned with the assumptions of the phenomenological paradigm allow for explaining unique phenomena, which may be valuable in a different context and in another organization as an interpretation of phenomena but cannot be entirely predictable in the future (Goffin, Ahlstrom, Bianchi, 2019).

This research focuses on Aptiv – global technology company, recognized as one of most sustainable companies from automotive sector, where business strategy is intricately linked to company's commitment to sustainability. Aptiv provides advanced solutions in electrification, safety, autonomy, and connectivity within the automotive business. The company operates in the automotive technology sector, developing innovative systems and components that enhance safety, energy efficiency, and the overall driving experience. Aptiv focuses on advancing technologies related to autonomous (driverless) vehicles and integrated vehicle systems. This corporation is one of the largest in the industry involved in the production of parts for the automotive sector. It employs approximately 163,000 workers (around 50,000 in the USA). Aptiv operates in 46 countries, including Poland, with the biggest Research and Development Center in Krakow. In the year 2022, Aptiv revisited its materiality assessment to guarantee that its sustainability strategy remains closely aligned with the ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) topics that hold utmost significance for the business and its stakeholders. This routine engagement process yields valuable insights, which are employed to fine-tune the company's initiatives as its sustainability strategy progresses. Drawing from the insights gained in the 2019 analysis, Aptiv utilized input from independent experts for the assessment, encompassing feedback from both internal and external stakeholders.

4. Findings

Aptiv has a sustainability strategy based on the 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015). Aptiv is dedicated to delivering top-quality solutions that are designed, developed, and manufactured responsibly, contributing to a safer, greener, and more connected world. This commitment extends to taking care of people and the communities in which company operates, all while minimizing its carbon footprint. The foundational pillars of company sustainability are: people, products, planet and platform. Code of Ethical Business Conduct serves as the foundation for instilling values into action. In 2022, senior leadership actively engaged with employees, promoting a culture of speaking up and providing ethical education through various channels.

With reference to People, Sustainability Development Goals number 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 13 (Climate Actions) are implemented by:

• Attract, develop & retain the best talent:

To achieve year-over-year improvement in employee engagement scores, the company is implementing a comprehensive strategy. This involves conducting regular employee surveys and pulse surveys to gather feedback and insights into the employees' experiences. The aim is not only to identify areas for improvement but also to recognize and reinforce positive aspects of the work environment. Additionally, the company is

focusing on increasing the internal fill rate on open positions, emphasizing the importance of promoting talent from within the organization. This approach contributes to a culture of continuous development and growth.

• Health & safety:

A proactive stance on mitigating risks and implementing health and safety best practices is a priority for the company. The goal is to ensure that 100% of manufacturing sites attain ISO 45001 certification, reflecting a commitment to maintaining high standards of occupational health and safety. Emphasis is also placed on improving workplace safety through the cultivation of a safe culture and the tracking of strong leading indicators. By focusing on these aspects, the company aims to create an environment where the well-being and safety of employees are paramount.

• Diversity, equity & inclusion:

The company is dedicated to cultivating an inclusive workforce that not only reflects diversity but also actively engages and attracts the best talent to fuel innovation. Initiatives include conducting pay equality studies globally to identify and close gender gaps. Furthermore, there is a specific focus on increasing gender diversity across all levels of the organization. By fostering a culture of equity and inclusion, the company aims to create an environment where everyone feels valued and has equal opportunities for growth and success.

• Community engagement & wellbeing:

The company is extending its commitment beyond its organizational boundaries by actively engaging with the community and promoting overall well-being. Initiatives include conducting vehicle safety education programs for children, with the ambitious goal of reaching 5000 children per year, totaling 30,000 children by 2025. Another environmental initiative involves planting 80,000 trees annually, contributing to a total of 480,000 trees by 2025. Additionally, the company is empowering girls in technology through workshops, dedicating 500 hours per year, with a goal of reaching 3000 total hours by 2025. These initiatives reflect the company's commitment to making a positive impact on society and the well-being of future generations.

With reference to Products, Sustainability Development Goals number 3 (Good health and Well-Being), 9 (Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Actions) are implemented by:

• Safe, green & connected solutions:

In company's commitment to SAFE, GREEN & CONNECTED SOLUTIONS, Aptiv is dedicated to providing cutting-edge multi-modal human-machine interface solutions. These innovations aim to significantly reduce driver distraction and enhance convenience during interactions with the vehicle. Notable features include advanced driver monitoring systems, gesture recognition technology, and child presence detection

mechanisms. By incorporating these elements, Aptiv strives to create a safer and more intuitive driving experience. Furthermore, company's focus extends beyond immediate safety concerns. Company is actively involved in developing transformative, sustainable architectures that lay the foundation for feature-rich, highly automated, and electrified vehicles of the future. This strategic approach aligns with their vision of contributing to the evolution of the automotive industry, promoting environmental sustainability, and embracing the paradigm shift toward electric mobility.

• Product quality:

Commitment to PRODUCT QUALITY underscores our dedication to developing and delivering products and solutions that consistently meet and exceed expected levels of performance. Through rigorous research, development, and testing processes, Aptiv ensures the reliability and durability of our offerings. This commitment extends across entire product portfolio, reflecting unwavering pursuit of excellence. To achieve these high standards, Aptiv employs state-of-the-art manufacturing practices, quality control measures, and continuous improvement initiatives. Their emphasis on product quality is not merely a goal but a guiding principle embedded in every stage of product development life cycle.

• Customer satisfaction:

At the core of values is the pursuit of CUSTOMER SATISFACTION. Company strives to maintain their position as the customers' partner of choice by consistently delivering industry-leading products and solutions. This involves understanding the evolving needs of customers and adapting offerings to exceed customers' expectations. Customer-centric approach encompasses not only the quality and functionality of products but also the overall experience of interacting with brand. Aptiv actively seeks feedback, foster open communication channels, and prioritize customer support to ensure that every interaction with organization is marked by satisfaction and trust.

With reference to Planet, Sustainability Development Goals number 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (affordable and Clean Energy), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Actions) are implemented by:

Climate change:

- a) Innovative Solutions: Aptiv is committed to developing cutting-edge solutions that not only curb carbon emissions but also enhance energy efficiency. This includes a targeted approach to reduce electricity consumption at its top 10 most energyintensive sites by obtaining ISO 50001 certification, a recognized standard for energy management systems.
- b) Renewable Energy: To further contribute to the fight against climate change, Aptiv aims to power its operations with 25% renewable electricity. This strategic shift toward cleaner energy sources aligns with global efforts to transition towards sustainable and renewable power.

- c) Supply Chain Carbon Footprint: Aptiv is dedicated to an ongoing reduction of the carbon footprint within its supply chain. This involves implementing measures to curtail emissions and minimize waste throughout the entire supply chain process.
- d) Environmental Management Certification: All manufacturing sites under Aptiv's purview are committed to achieving environmental management system certification (ISO14001). This ensures that these sites adhere to international standards, emphasizing the importance of environmentally sustainable practices.

• Waste & packaging:

- a) Circular Economy Approach: Aptiv sets a high standard for waste management by aspiring to achieve and maintain a waste recycling rate from manufacturing operations above 80%. This commitment reflects a dedication to a circular economy approach, where materials are reused, recycled, or repurposed to minimize environmental impact.
- b) Waste Reduction Strategies: Aptiv implements comprehensive waste reduction strategies that prioritize sustainable practices in manufacturing processes. By focusing on recycling and responsible waste management, Aptiv aims to contribute to the broader goal of minimizing waste generation.

• Water:

- a) Identifying Water Scarcity Areas: Aptiv is proactively addressing water conservation by identifying areas where water scarcity is a concern in locations where the company operates. This involves a strategic assessment of water availability to ensure responsible resource management.
- b) Annual Water Consumption Reduction: In high-risk areas with water scarcity concerns, Aptiv is committed to reducing water consumption by 2% annually. This targeted reduction aligns with sustainable water usage practices and demonstrates Aptiv's commitment to responsible water stewardship in regions facing water challenges.

These detailed actions illustrate Aptiv's holistic approach to environmental sustainability, outlining specific strategies and initiatives in the areas of climate change, waste and packaging, and water conservation.

With reference to Platform, Sustainability Development Goals number 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) are implemented by:

• Ethics & compliance:

a) Code of Ethical Business Conduct: Aptiv aims to instill a strong ethical foundation within the organization. This involves the distribution of a comprehensive Code of Ethical Business Conduct to 95% of its salaried employees. This code serves as a guiding framework, outlining principles and standards to ensure that employees

- conduct business with integrity, transparency, and in compliance with relevant regulations.
- b) Compliance Training: To reinforce ethical behavior and regulatory compliance, Aptiv conducts mandatory compliance training for its salaried employees. This training is designed to educate employees about key legal and ethical considerations in the business environment. By ensuring that 95% of salaried employees undergo this training, Aptiv demonstrates its commitment to a workforce that understands and upholds ethical standards.
- c) Annual Risk Assessment: Aptiv undertakes an annual risk assessment across all its sites globally. This comprehensive evaluation helps identify potential areas of vulnerability and non-compliance. By regularly assessing risks on a global scale, Aptiv can proactively address challenges and implement preventive measures, fostering a culture of continuous improvement in ethics and compliance.

• Sustainable supply chain:

- a) Aptiv Code of Conduct for Business Partners: Aptiv actively promotes ethical practices not only within its organization but also throughout its supply chain. The company encourages key suppliers to align with its Code of Conduct for Business Partners. This code outlines principles related to environmental sustainability, labor practices, and business integrity. Engaging suppliers in adopting these principles helps create a sustainable and responsible supply chain ecosystem.
- b) Third-Party Due Diligence Program: Aptiv is committed to expanding its third-party due diligence program. This initiative involves a comprehensive assessment of the ethical, legal, and sustainability practices of external partners. By ensuring that third parties share Aptiv's commitment to ethical conduct, the company mitigates risks associated with its supply chain and strengthens its overall corporate responsibility.

• Data security:

- a) Alignment with International Standards: Aptiv places a high priority on data security. The company is actively working to align all its data cybersecurity practices with appropriate international standards. This includes adhering to recognized frameworks and guidelines to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its data assets.
- b) Rigorous Cybersecurity Standards: Aptiv is dedicated to maintaining rigorous cybersecurity, privacy, and data governance standards. This commitment involves implementing robust measures to safeguard sensitive information, prevent data breaches, and comply with evolving data protection regulations. By prioritizing data security, Aptiv demonstrates its responsibility in handling and protecting information assets.

Aptiv's Sustainability Strategy concentrates on areas such as:

- a) employees education Aptiv focuses on ensuring a culture of safety based on prevention, training, verification and risk mitigation in manufacturing plants, technical centers and offices. Standard training includes topics such as emergency preparedness and response, chemical material management and ergonomics. Goal for each employee is 4 training hours per year,
- b) employees workplace in 2022, Aptiv recycled 84 percent of the total waste that generated. Cost savings from supplier recycling programs help fund environmental projects in local communities, such as solar panel installation projects, freshwater conservation initiatives and reforestation efforts,
- c) employees engagement Aptiv supported the restoration of hydrological micro basins in the Sierra Tarahumara region of Mexico by planting almost 40,000 trees to help preserve the region's biodiversity and protect fresh water supplies. Planting was done by employees themselves.

The findings suggest that Aptiv recognizes the significance of social responsibility in its operations. The company emphasizes the well-being of its employees, promotes diversity and inclusion, and engages in community development projects. Through partnerships and outreach programs, Aptiv contributes to the enhancement of education, healthcare, and overall societal well-being in the regions where it operates. In the pursuit of Company Social Responsibility (CSR,) organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of community engagement and wellbeing initiatives. This success in sustainable development can be attributed, in part, to effective Organizational Alignment, which is a crucial aspect of management because influences an organization's ability to achieve goals, adapt to changes, maintain consistency in actions, and build coherence across different areas of the organization. It may involve adjusting the organizational structure, human resource management, communication, strategic objectives, and many other elements to create a coherent and integrated whole (Conway, Andrews, 2020).

5. Discussion

Aptiv aligns its organizational elements to ensure a cohesive approach to sustainability and recognizes the significance of its workforce in achieving sustainability goals. Aptiv applies this theory by fostering a culture that encourages employees to embrace sustainable practices (Moslehpour, 2022). The company provides training programs to raise awareness about the importance of sustainability (Yuliantini et al., 2023) and equips employees with the knowledge and tools needed to contribute actively. Aptiv encourages employees to engage in behaviors that align with the company's sustainability goals (Algarni et al., 2022). By fostering a culture

that promotes environmental and social responsibility, the company aims to shape employees' attitudes and subjective norms, leading to a collective commitment to sustainable actions (Silva, 2023). The Aptiv case study illustrates practical implementations for managing a company in a way that takes into account key SDGs and overall implications for business operations. This paper provides a valuable insights for individuals within the private sector, enabling them to effectively involve their employees in supporting the SDGs initiatives. A potential limitation of this study lies in single source case study, but the findings from this research have the potential to shape future investigations into sustainable development models, broadening the range of variables considered and striving to formulate a comprehensive model. This would allow for assessing the effectiveness of organizations policies and strategies implemented and quantifying their medium- and long-term impacts.

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