



## INFLUENCE OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS ON BUSINESS: STRATEGIES OF ANTI-CRISIS SUPPORT FOR THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This article considers the strategies of anti-crisis support for the entrepreneurial ecosystem of various countries due to COVID-19 restrictions. The relevance of the study is determined by the need to search for and develop a set of measures aimed at mitigating the socio-economic consequences of the crises caused by COVID-19. **Methods:** Since most enterprises did not have sufficient reserves to cover downtime-related losses, this led to the closure of businesses. Measures of state support for small- and medium-sized businesses affected by the coronavirus should neutralize the consequences of the socio-economic crisis caused by a new biological threat. However, the timeliness and sufficiency of state support measures have generated a high level of social tension among entrepreneurs. According to many entrepreneurs, the anti-crisis measures taken by some states were ineffective and insufficient. This is confirmed by the results of social surveys. In view of the foregoing, it is relevant to develop a methodology for assessing the effectiveness of anti-crisis measures implemented by various states during the period of biological threats. **Results:** The fundamental scientific topic is the search for solutions to maintain a balance in the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the event of various biological threats, as well as the creation of conditions for the adaptation of entrepreneurs to the current socio-economic pandemic and post-pandemic conditions. **Conclusion:** The study results aim at mitigating the impact of pandemic-related crises on the business sector. It is important to restart the global management of entrepreneurial ecosystems based on the improvement of strategies for anti-crisis state support for entrepreneurs.

**Keywords:** Anti-crisis measures; Entrepreneurial ecosystem; Strategy; Biological threats; Coronavirus.



# INFLUÊNCIA DAS RESTRIÇÕES COVID-19 NAS EMPRESAS: ESTRATÉGIAS DE APOIO ANTI-CRISE PARA O ECOSISTEMA EMPRESARIAL

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Este artigo considera as estratégias de apoio anticrise ao ecossistema empreendedor de vários países devido às restrições do COVID-19. A relevância do estudo é determinada pela necessidade de procurar e desenvolver um conjunto de medidas que visem mitigar as consequências socioeconômicas das crises provocadas pela COVID-19.

**Métodos:** Como a maioria das empresas não tinha reservas suficientes para cobrir as perdas relacionadas com o tempo de inatividade, isso levou ao fechamento dos negócios. As medidas de apoio estatal às pequenas e médias empresas afetadas pelo coronavírus devem neutralizar as consequências da crise socioeconômica causada por uma nova ameaça biológica. No entanto, a pontualidade e a suficiência das medidas de apoio do Estado geraram um alto nível de tensão social entre os empresários. Segundo muitos empresários, as medidas anticrise adotadas por alguns estados foram ineficazes e insuficientes. Isso é confirmado pelos resultados das pesquisas sociais. Diante do exposto, é relevante desenvolver uma metodologia para avaliar a eficácia das medidas anticrise implementadas por vários estados durante o período de ameaças biológicas.

**Resultados:** O tema científico fundamental é a procura de soluções para manter o equilíbrio no ecossistema empresarial na eventualidade de várias ameaças biológicas, bem como a criação de condições para a adaptação dos empreendedores à atual pandemia socioeconômica e pós-pandemia condições. **Conclusão:** Os resultados do estudo visam mitigar o impacto das crises relacionadas à pandemia no setor empresarial. É importante reiniciar a gestão global dos ecossistemas empresariais com base no aprimoramento das estratégias de apoio estatal anticrise aos empreendedores.

**Palavras-chave:** Medidas anti- crise; Ecossistema empresarial; Estratégia; Ameaças biológicas; Coronavírus.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In connection with the global crisis caused by the coronavirus, most large-, medium-, and small-sized enterprises found themselves in an uncertain situation in 2020-2021. If the traditional approach involves three scenarios (optimistic, pessimistic, and neutral), it becomes necessary to solve the problem of stabilizing the entrepreneurial ecosystem based on a multi-parameter analysis.

Small- and medium-sized enterprises in turbulent conditions showed the greatest vulnerability compared to large companies due to the fact that most of them did not have reserves to cover downtime-related losses. In most business cases under consideration, this led to the closure or sale of the business at a minimal price. To neutralize the consequences of the socio-economic crisis caused by a new biological threat, measures of state support for small- and medium-sized businesses affected by



the coronavirus were called upon. This includes reducing the rate of insurance premiums, postponing the submission of tax returns and accounting reports, reducing scheduled and unscheduled inspections of supervisory bodies, the provision of subsidies for each employee, as well as preferential loans.

Due to the specific institutional conditions of some countries, most administrative and financial decisions to support the business sector were implemented partially or in a distorted form, which in fact had smaller effects compared to those planned. According to many entrepreneurs, the anti-crisis measures taken at the federal and regional levels were ineffective and insufficient. State authorities were unprepared for an effective response to global challenges, which is confirmed by the results of numerous social surveys and socio-economic indicators showing a negative trend in the business sector.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in the fact that it synthesizes and develops a methodology for assessing the effectiveness of anti-crisis measures implemented by state and regional authorities in the business sector during the period of biological threats based on the analysis of the strategies of anti-crisis state support for entrepreneurship in the chosen countries.

The study results will be of fundamental and practical importance for the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. They can be applied by state and regional authorities in the preparation of anti-crisis strategies to support the business sector due to the emergence of new biological threats.

## 2 LITERATURE OVERVIEW

This study is among the first to improve the strategies of anti-crisis state support for the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the context of global crises caused by biological threats. The business sphere is studied by many scholars. This is explained by the challenges of the current economic development to the scientific community. Scholars face the task of developing recommendations for balancing the business environment and managing risks in the face of the negative impact of biological threats.

One of the important areas of modern research is the effectiveness of state support for small businesses. Some Russian scholars focus on improving the process of strategic planning in relation to small businesses (Mirzoeva, 2015). Due to the growing interest in lean production, others develop new models in the management of a small business entity and its floating capital (Egorova & Filobokova, 2017). According to M.



Polozkov and R. Chvanov (2015), small business needs special tax preferences in addition to financial and property support.

The innovative development of the northern territories, including based on the development of entrepreneurship, is considered by A.B. Zelinskaya, L.L. Bogomolova, and E.I. Kushnikov (2018). It is worth mentioning studies on the economic assessment of the resource potential of traditional crafts of the northern peoples, including in crisis conditions, reflected in the works of R.K. Araslanov and L.L. Bogomolova (2016).

We should pay attention to the works of foreign scholars who address many topical issues. Some foreign scholars study the regional business environment (Hong-Tao & Dong-Ping, 2011). Others believe that one of the methods for assessing the effectiveness of state support for small businesses is international ratings (Williams & Round, 2009). Some foreign scholars believe that it is important to support entrepreneurial education and develop team competences (Williams & Dzhekova, 2014).

The most important experience in the development of the entrepreneurial environment has been accumulated abroad. The most crucial studies are conducted by J. Mayer, E. Marty, J. Lipsett, J. McCarthy, C. Wilson, M. Roger, and S. Osberg (Roger & Osberg, 2007). The effective construction of the socio-economic environment, the implementation of strategies for territorial development, and the ranking and typology of regions are reflected in the works of R. Camagni, R. Capello, S. Lenzi, M. Foddy, S. Usai, and K. Kozovsky (Camagni & Capello, 2013; Capello & Lenzi, 2013).

The analysis of the current research in the field of state support for the business sector during a pandemic (Budko, 2020; Bugaenko, 2020; Egorshin & Guskova, 2020; Ivantsev, 2020; Nekrasova, 2020; Shakhgiraev & Albastov, 2020; Stepanov, 2020) has revealed that unified conceptual approaches to balancing a country's entrepreneurial ecosystem under the conditions of uncertainty have not been developed by either Russian or foreign scientists (Crick & Crick, 2020; Seelos & Mair, 2005; Sigala, 2020; Tsatsulin & Tsatsulin, 2020; Yasir et al., 2020). Scholars note that the state needs to manage risks and implement support measures for entrepreneurs not to lose the middle class of society which ensures social stability and creates new jobs. However, there is no consensus among scholars regarding effective and ineffective measures of state support. This stipulates a bigger interest in this area of research within the framework of this study.



### 3 METHODS

The research object is to analyze the strategies of anti-crisis support for the entrepreneurial ecosystem of various countries in the face of biological threats and challenges. The study aims at developing scientific and methodological and substantiating practical recommendations for improving the strategies of anti-crisis state support for the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the context of global crises caused by biological threats.

We put forward a hypothesis that the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the face of biological threats is directly proportional to the volume and quality of measures implemented by the state (region), including:

- 1) The anti-crisis support of the socio-economic sphere in case of a biological threat;
- 2) The anti-crisis support for the healthcare system in case of a biological threat;
- 3) The anti-crisis support for the entrepreneurial ecosystem and individual initiatives.

We used the following methods to conduct scientific research:

1) Statistical methods for grouping heterogeneous statistical indicators and studying their change over the period under consideration;

2) Correlation analysis to consider the grouped statistical indicators and reveal positive and/or negative correlation between various parameters of the entrepreneurial ecosystem;

3) Content analysis is a formalized method for studying text and graphic information, which consists in transforming the studied data into quantitative indicators and its statistical processing. This method is used for conducting a qualitative and quantitative analysis of documents and business cases to identify trends in the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the context of biological threats in different countries.

Additional methods are historical-logical, structural-functional, comparative analysis, special methods of economic analysis, and tabular and graphical methods of data visualization.

### 4 RESULTS

The development of economic processes according to the black swan theory negatively affects small- and medium-sized business entities. Measures of state support for such enterprises influenced by the coronavirus should neutralize the consequences of the socio-economic crisis caused by a new biological threat. The timeliness and adequacy of state support measures stipulate a high level of social



tension among entrepreneurs. For comparison: the USA allocated 2.6 trillion dollars (12% of GDP) to support small businesses, Germany spent 1.4 trillion dollars (37% of GDP), Italy used 402 billion dollars (20% of GDP), and Russia settled on 20 billion dollars (1.2% of GDP).

Based on the analysis of strategies for anti-crisis support of the business ecosystem during the period of a biological threat, we propose a classification of government decisions in the form of the Strategic Decisions Square of states during the pandemic consisting of four main strategies (Table 1):

- 1) The mobilization strategy;
- 2) The healthcare system reboot strategy;
- 3) The uncoordinated (mixed) strategy;
- 4) The liberal strategy.

**Table 1.** The Strategic Decision Square of states in the context of the coronavirus pandemic

<p><b>1. Mobilization strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The event is coordinated from a single center or single support service for citizens;</li> <li>– Unified position of experts and officials reflected in mass media;</li> <li>– Restrictive measures;</li> <li>– The timely development of reports and instructions (observation, testing, treatment, rehabilitation);</li> <li>– Uniform monitoring and reporting;</li> <li>– Shrinking rights of civil society;</li> <li>– Restricted rights and freedoms;</li> <li>– High rates of vaccination;</li> <li>– Close interaction with local communities and a high level of explanatory work;</li> <li>– Closing the state borders.</li> </ul> <p><i>Countries adhering to this strategy:</i> China, Vietnam, Singapore, Japan, and New Zealand.</p>	<p><b>2. Healthcare system reboot strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Investments in infrastructure and medical personnel, purchase of medicines and vaccines;</li> <li>– Effective information policy based on the creation of high-quality information portals;</li> <li>– High awareness of citizens;</li> <li>– Contradictory opinions of experts about the quality of vaccines;</li> <li>– Numerous citizen support services;</li> <li>– High-level diagnosis of the disease;</li> <li>– Targeted socio-economic support of the population and businesses upon relevant requests;</li> <li>– Travel restrictions.</li> </ul> <p><i>Countries adhering to this strategy:</i> Canada and Turkey.</p>
<p><b>3. Uncoordinated (mixed) strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of a single center and decentralization in decision-making;</li> <li>– Contradictions in the implemented measures and statements of experts and officials in mass media;</li> <li>– Shifting responsibility to territorial entities within the country and territorial quarantine;</li> <li>– Lack of a unified service to support citizens;</li> <li>– Slow development of reports and instructions (observation, testing, treatment, rehabilitation);</li> <li>– Crisis of confidence in social institutions and local communities;</li> <li>– Low rates of vaccination;</li> <li>– High workload on the medical staff and the expected enthusiasm of medical workers;</li> <li>– Partial closure of borders.</li> </ul> <p><i>Countries adhering to this strategy:</i> Russia, the USA, and India.</p>	<p><b>4. Liberal strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Not introducing restrictions or ignoring the problem;</li> <li>– Focus not on the vaccination of citizens but on the formation of herd immunity;</li> <li>– Refusal of quarantine measures;</li> <li>– Priority of economic development over biological threats and prevention of economic crises;</li> <li>– Recommendations to companies and enterprises on transferring employees to remote work;</li> <li>– Focus on maintaining the mental health of citizens.</li> </ul> <p><i>Countries adhering to this strategy:</i> Sweden and Brazil.</p>

Source: compiled based on the content analysis of text information.

Under the non-standard conditions of biological threats, different states have different action strategies. Decent results in containing the pandemic and preventing a socio-economic collapse were shown by countries implementing the mobilization strategy accompanied by centralization in decision-making and limited civil rights and individual freedoms to effectively combat the pandemic and ensure a positive effect for the whole society (China, Vietnam, and Japan).

Countries that have relied on the health system reboot strategy and the provision of direct targeted support to the population and businesses upon the relevant requests (Canada and Turkey) have shown good results in stabilizing the socio-economic situation in the event of a biological threat. These countries pursue a successful information policy based on the creation of high-quality information portals.

Large countries (Russia, India, and the USA) with heterogeneous territorial entities in terms of their socio-economic development often implemented the uncoordinated (mixed) strategy to combat the pandemic during the coronavirus period. Decentralization in decision-making, contradictions in the implemented measures and statements by experts and officials, and shifting responsibility for events in territorial entities within the country have decreased the effectiveness of the strategy against a biological threat. This is confirmed by the dynamics of a population decline in these countries at the end of the year.

A striking example of implementing the liberal strategy due to the emergence of a biological threat is demonstrated by Sweden. This country prioritized the prevention of an economic crisis and the economic development of the state over quarantine and other measures to combat biological threats. The rejection of quarantine measures and focus on the formation of herd immunity led to the low effectiveness of the state's strategy in the face of biological threats and high mortality rates.

Due to the emergence of biological threats, the anti-crisis strategies of various states are subject to evaluation. We propose the following methodology for assessing the effectiveness of anti-crisis measures implemented by the state (region) during the period of biological threats (Table 2).



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**Table 2.** The multi-parameter evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-crisis support for the business ecosystem under biological threats

No.	Factor influencing the entrepreneurial ecosystem of any state in case of a biological threat	Assigned score: 1 – measure is implemented, 0 – measure is not implemented
<b>1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-crisis support for the socio-economic sphere in the event of a biological threat</b>		
1.1.	Single support service for the population in case of a biological threat with the operator's response time not exceeding 0.5-1 minute	1/0
1.2.	Targeted socio-economic support of the population upon relevant requests through online services (applications, high-quality information portals)	1/0
1.3.	Well-established system of interaction between the state and local communities, volunteer organizations with feedback, including through online services	1/0
1.4.	Social payments and/or the provision of food and medicine packages during self-isolation, quarantine, and movement restrictions	1/0
1.5.	Introduction of restrictive measures (lockdown, social distancing, movement restrictions, remote work, etc.) in case of a threat to the life of every citizen based on a growing epidemiological risk and judgments of the relevant services and expert communities	1/0
1.6.	Psychological counseling and support for citizens, including using online services, webinars, and video conferences	1/0
1.7.	Provision of special one-time benefits in the event of a biological threat to families with children	1/0
1.8.	Provision of special benefits in the event of a biological threat for students, retired people, the disabled, and other vulnerable categories of the population	1/0
1.9.	Provision of special benefits in the event of a biological threat for persons who have lost their jobs and/or unemployed citizens	1/0
1.10.	Provision of state and municipal services to citizens through exclusively online services (applications, high-quality information portals)	1/0
Total for the 1 <sup>st</sup> group of factors		10 – maximum score (points); 0 – minimum score (points)
<b>2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-crisis support for the healthcare system in case of a biological threat</b>		
2.1.	Conducting fundamental and exploratory scientific research by research centers, universities, institutes in various areas of improving the healthcare sector	1/0
2.2.	High speed of innovation in the health care system of the state	1/0
2.3.	Availability of technologies for transformation and re-profiling of healthcare facilities	1/0
2.4.	High speed, quality and safety of developed vaccines and drugs	1/0
2.5.	High speed of development of reports and instructions (observation, testing, treatment, rehabilitation) in the healthcare sector. The availability of unified forms of monitoring and reporting in the event of a biological threat accumulated by a single analytical center	1/0
2.6.	Implementation of a set of measures aimed at supporting medical personnel: – Provision of special bonus payments to medical personnel in the conditions of work with biological threats; – Psychological counseling and support of medical workers in the conditions of work with biological threats; – Psychological counseling and support of medical workers in the	1/0



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	conditions of work with biological threats; – Provision of free hot meals and special rest rooms for medical workers in the conditions of work with biological threats; – High-quality provision of personal protective equipment for medical employees working with infected citizens; – Annual 100% one-time reimbursement of sanatorium holidays, treatment and recovery to medical workers and their families	
2.7.	Increase in the volume of state investments in the event of a biological threat in infrastructure, healthcare facilities, medical personnel, the purchase of medicines and vaccines at the level of at least 25% (compared to the previous base year)	1/0
2.8.	No facts of interruption in the provision of primary and other medical services	1/0
2.9.	Availability of programs for the rehabilitation and restoration of the health of citizens after an illness	1/0
2.10.	Medical consultations using innovative solutions, including telemedicine	1/0
Total for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> group of factors		10 – maximum score (points); 0 – minimum score (points)
<b>3. Evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-crisis support for the business sector and private initiative in the event of a biological threat</b>		
3.1.	Monitoring the state of enterprises, organizations, and the self-employed by types of economic activity most affected by a biological threat (construction, tourism, catering, trade, hotel business, services)	1/0
3.2.	Reducing or eliminating taxes for businesses, organizations, and the self-employed most affected by a biological threat	1/0
3.3.	Financial support and subsidies for small-, medium-, and large-sized enterprises and organizations and the self-employed during the period of a biological threat	1/0
3.4.	Provision of an interest-free loan or a loan on favorable terms (at a rate of no more than 2%) to enterprises, organizations, and the self-employed during the period of a biological threat	1/0
3.5.	Providing rent payment holidays or compensating rental rates to businesses, organizations, and the self-employed during the period of a biological threat	1/0
3.6.	Moratorium on inspections by control and supervisory authorities of enterprises and organizations, as well as the deferral of tax reporting	1/0
3.7.	Implementation of programs for emergency subsidizing of wages in enterprises and organizations under the conditions of biological threats, as well as programs for reducing insurance premiums	1/0
3.8.	Compensation of utility service payments to enterprises and organizations in the context of a biological threat	1/0
3.9.	Providing state and municipal services to entrepreneurs via online (applications, high-quality business information portals)	1/0
3.10.	Availability of the fund for insurance of the activities of enterprises, organizations, and self-employed in the conditions of biological threats	1/0
Total for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> group of factors		10 – maximum score (points); 0 – minimum score (points)
<b>Features describing the effectiveness of anti-crisis support for the entrepreneurial ecosystem under biological threats</b>		<b>Results in points</b>
1	<b>High</b> efficiency of the strategy of anti-crisis support of the entrepreneurial ecosystem by the state in the event of a biological threat	30-20 points
2	<b>Average</b> effectiveness of the strategy of anti-crisis support of the	19-10 points



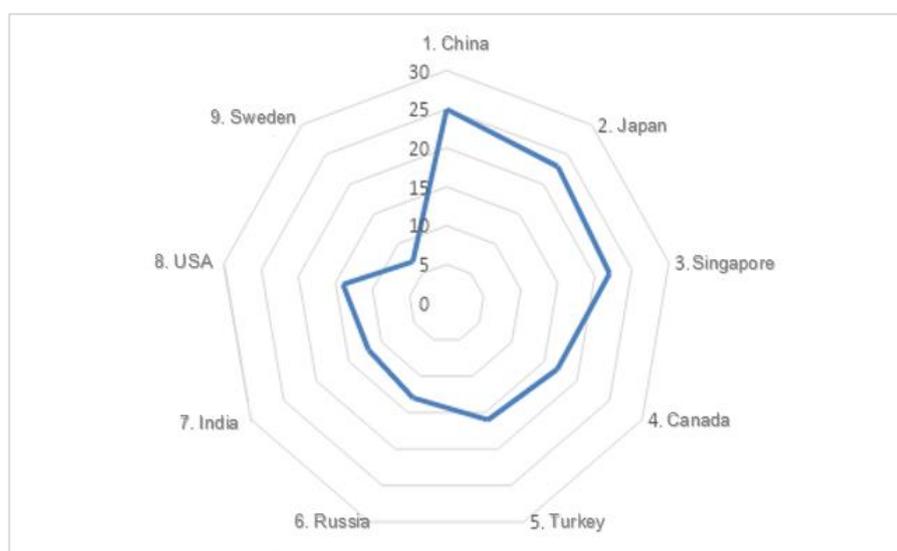
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	entrepreneurial ecosystem by the state in the event of a biological threat	
3	<b>Low</b> effectiveness of the strategy of anti-crisis support for the entrepreneurial ecosystem by the state in the event of a biological threat	9-0 points

Source: compiled by the authors of the article.

Let us test the proposed author's methodology as exemplified by the following countries: China, Japan, Singapore, Canada, Turkey, Russia, India, the USA, and Sweden (Figure 1). As a result of a multi-parametric assessment of the effectiveness of anti-crisis support for the business ecosystem under biological threats in different countries for the period 2020-2021, we obtained the following results:

- China – 25 points;
- Japan – 23 points;
- Singapore – 22 points;
- Canada – 17 points;
- Turkey – 16 points;
- USA – 14 points;
- Russia – 13 points;
- India – 12 points;
- Sweden – 7 points.



**Figure 1.** Multi-parametric assessment of the effectiveness of anti-crisis support for the entrepreneurial ecosystem under biological threats in different countries (2020-2021)

## 5 CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of anti-crisis support strategies for the entrepreneurial



ecosystem of various countries during the period of biological threats, we identified four main strategies: the mobilization strategy, healthcare system reboot strategy, uncoordinated (mixed) strategy, and liberal strategy.

Based on the proposed *methodology for assessing the effectiveness of anti-crisis measures implemented by the state (region) during the period of biological threats*, we conducted a multi-parametric assessment of the measures implemented in the period from 2020-2021.

Such countries as China, Japan, and Singapore have highly efficient strategies of anti-crisis support for the business ecosystem in the event of biological threats. The average effectiveness of anti-crisis strategies was demonstrated by Canada, Turkey, Russia, the USA, and India. The low efficiency of the implemented anti-crisis strategy is typical of Sweden.

In the course of the study, we confirmed our hypothesis that the business ecosystem in the face of biological threats is directly proportional to the volume and quality of measures implemented by the state (region).

The low effectiveness of anti-crisis support was demonstrated by those countries that prioritized the prevention of an economic crisis and the predominance of economic development over measures to combat biological threats. For these countries, the refusal to reform the healthcare system during the period of biological threats had serious consequences in the social sphere.

The average effectiveness of the anti-crisis strategy was typical of those countries that rely on supporting the socio-economic sphere and the entrepreneurial ecosystem. It is worth noting that these countries focus on supporting the population through the implementation of targeted support programs upon the relevant requests.

The countries demonstrating the high efficiency of the anti-crisis strategy worked in a balanced way to support the socio-economic sphere, the healthcare system, and the entrepreneurial ecosystem (including individual initiatives).

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