

Procedure Year: 2025

Procedure Rating:  Satisfactory

Procedure Status: Approved

Procedure Name: ASM-19053

Procedure Department: CO - Montenegro - Podjorica

Procedure Type: Closure

Record Owner: Aleksandra Kikovic

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Portofolio/Project Type: Project

RELATED PORTFOLIOS/PROJECTS (1)

NAME	PORTOFOLIO/PROJECT NAME	DEPARTMENT	STATUS	ATLAS PROJECT NUMBER	START DATE	END DATE
00112636	Creative Montenegro-UNDP-MNE-00112636	CO - Montenegro - Podjorica	Financially Closed	00114749	6/1/2019	12/31/2024

Approval Information

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Approved By: Silke HOLLANDER <silke.hollander@undp.org>

APPROVAL HISTORY

STEP NAME	DATE	STATUS	ASSIGNED TO
Submitted for Approval	2025-12-30 06:57:05	Approved	Silke HOLLANDER
Approval Request Submitted	2025-12-30 06:40:02	Started	Aleksandra Kikovic

QA Questionnaire:

Strategic

Status: Complete

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

1. Did the project pro-actively identified changes to the external environment and incorporated them into the project strategy?

- ☐ 3: The project team has identified relevant changes in the external environment that may present new opportunities or threats to the project's ability to achieve its objectives and the assumptions have been tested to determine if the project's strategy is still valid. There is evidence that the project board has considered the implications, and documented any changes needed to the project in response. (all must be true)
- ☒ 2: The project team has identified relevant changes in the external environment that may present new opportunities or threats to the project's ability to achieve its objectives. There is some evidence that the project board discussed this, but relevant changes may not have been fully integrated in the project. (both must be true)
- ☐ 1: The project team may have considered relevant changes in the external environment since implementation began, but there is no evidence that the project team has considered changes to the project as a result.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

During implementation, the project proactively monitored changes in the external environment and continuously adjusted its strategic orientation in coordination with national partners, in particular the Ministry responsible for cultural affairs. This process was complicated by frequent changes in the Government of Montenegro, including multiple government cabinets and line ministers, which resulted in a lack of clearly defined and stable priorities for some expected outcomes. These developments are

documented in the enclosed Project Management Board (PMB) minutes. For reasons of efficiency and effectiveness, a joint Project Management Board was established to oversee this project and another parallel project implemented in partnership with the Ministry responsible for cultural affairs. Despite these challenges, the project strengthened Montenegro's creative and cultural sectors through the development of creative hubs and cultural centres, organisation of national and international events and competitions, and promotion of research and digital platforms. These activities engaged hundreds of artists and stakeholders, fostering innovation, collaboration, and sustainable growth in the sector.

2. Was the project aligned with the thematic focus of the Strategic Plan?

- ☐ 3: The project responds to at least one of the development settings as specified in the Strategic Plan (SP) and adopts at least one Signature Solution and the project's RRF includes at all the relevant SP output indicators. (all must be true)
- ☒ 2: The project responds to one of the three areas of development work as specified in the Strategic Plan. The project's RRF includes at least one SP output indicator, if relevant. (both must be true)
- ☐ 1: While the project may respond to a partner's identified need, this need falls outside the UNDP Strategic Plan. Also select this option if none of the relevant SP indicators are included in the RRF.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

RELATED STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME: Outcome 1: Structural transformation is accelerated, particularly green, inclusive and digital transitions

COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOME involving UNDP: Outcome 1: By 2027, all people, especially vulnerable people, benefit from improved management and state of natural resources and increasingly innovative, competitive, gender-responsive and inclusive economic development that is climate resilient and low carbon. Due to the specific nature of the project, SP indicators did not fit.

Relevant

Status: Complete

Quality Rating: Needs Improvement

3. Are the project's targeted groups, and particularly those marginalized, vulnerable and left further behind (LNOB), being systematically engaged, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized, to ensure the project leaves no one behind (LNOB) and remains relevant for them?

- ☐ 3: Systematic and structured feedback was collected over the project duration from a representative sample of beneficiaries, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized, as part of the project's monitoring system. Representatives from the targeted groups were active members of the project's governance mechanism (i.e., the project board or equivalent) and there is credible evidence that their feedback informs project decision making. (all must be true)
- ☒ 2: Targeted groups were engaged in implementation and monitoring, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized. Beneficiary feedback, which may be anecdotal, was collected regularly to ensure the project addressed local priorities. This information was used to inform project decision making. (all must be true to select this option)
- ☐ 1: Some beneficiary feedback may have been collected, but this information did not inform project decision making. This option should also be selected if no beneficiary feedback was collected
- ☐ Not Applicable

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

The project supported the development of cultural policies, promoted the work of creators, and facilitated the market placement of their products. Project beneficiaries included youth and women, who were actively engaged through the planning, design, and establishment of creative hubs and similar initiatives.

4. Did the project generate knowledge, and lessons learned (i.e., what has worked and what has not) and has this knowledge informed management decisions to ensure the continued relevance of the project towards its stated objectives, the quality of its outputs and the management of risk?

- ☐ 3: Knowledge and lessons learned from internal or external sources (gained, for example, from Peer Assists, After Action Reviews or Lessons Learned Workshops) backed by credible evidence from evaluation, corporate policies/strategies, analysis and monitoring were discussed in project board meetings and reflected in the minutes. There is clear evidence that changes were made to the project to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true)
- ☒ 2: Knowledge and lessons learned backed by relatively limited evidence, drawn mainly from within the project, were considered by the project team. There is some evidence that changes were made to the project as a result to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be

true)

- ☐ 1: There is limited or no evidence that knowledge and lessons learned were collected by the project team. There is little or no evidence that this informed project decision making.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

Lessons learned reflect key insights gained from the project and provide valuable guidance for future interventions in the creative industries space.

Project Lessons learned report is attached.

5. Was the project sufficiently at scale, or is there potential to scale up in the future, to meaningfully contribute to development change?

- ☐ 3: There was credible evidence that the project reached sufficient number of beneficiaries (either directly through significant coverage of target groups, or indirectly, through policy change) to meaningfully contribute to development change.
- ☐ 2: While the project was not considered at scale, there are explicit plans in place to scale up the project in the future (e.g. by extending its coverage or using project results to advocate for policy change).
- ☒ 1: The project was not at scale, and there are no plans to scale up the project in the future.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

The project successfully delivered its initially planned results and, in several areas, went beyond original targets despite significant obstacles during implementation. However, the intervention was not designed or resourced at a scale that would enable it to drive broader systemic development change on its own, and there are no concrete plans or secured resources for scaling up the intervention in the foreseeable future. The potential for future expansion largely depends on government priorities and funding decisions by national counterparts, particularly the line Ministry responsible for culture and media, which has not identified this area as a high priority at present. As such, while the project contributed valuable models and tools, its scope remains limited and without an agreed strategy or financing for scale-up. The Team will continue to monitor the developments in the sector and engage with the Ministry to identify any potential in the future.

Principled

Status: Complete

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

6. Were the project's measures (through outputs, activities, indicators) to address gender inequalities and empower women relevant and produced the intended effect? If not, evidence-based adjustments and changes were made.

- ☐ 3: The project team has systematically gathered data and evidence through project monitoring on the relevance of the measures to address gender inequalities and empower women. Analysis of data and evidence were used to inform adjustments and changes, as appropriate. (both must be true)
- ☒ 2: The project team had some data and evidence on the relevance of the measures to address gender inequalities and empower women. There is evidence that at least some adjustments were made, as appropriate. (both must be true)
- ☐ 1: The project team had limited or no evidence on the relevance of measures to address gender inequalities and empowering women. No evidence of adjustments and/or changes made. This option should also be selected if the project has no measures to address gender inequalities and empower women relevant to the project results and activities.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

Project activities were designed to contribute to the gender equality and empowerment of women-artists and cultural workers. Final Report enclosed. Publication Let's Develop enclosed.

7. Were social and environmental impacts and risks successfully managed and monitored?

- ☐ 3: Social and environmental risks were tracked in the risk log. Appropriate assessments conducted where required (i.e., Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for High risk projects and some level of social and environmental assessment for Moderate risk projects as identified through SESP). Relevant management plan(s) developed for identified risks through consultative process and implemented, resourced, and monitored. Risks effectively managed or mitigated. If there is a substantive change to the project or change in context that affects risk levels, the SESP was updated to reflect these changes. (all must be true)
- ☒ 2: Social and environmental risks were tracked in the risk log. Appropriate assessments were conducted where required (i.e., Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for high/substantial-risk projects and targeted assessments for moderate risk projects as

identified through SESP). Relevant management plan(s) developed, implemented, and monitored for identified risks. Select this option for SESP exempted projects and/or categorized as low risk through the SESP.

☐ 1: Social and environmental risks were tracked in the risk log. For projects categorized as High or Moderate Risk, there was no evidence that social and environmental assessments completed and/or management plans or measures development, implemented or monitored. There are substantive changes to the project or changes in the context but SESP was not updated. (any may be true)

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

Social and environmental risks were systematically tracked in the risk log. However, challenges encountered during the reconstruction of cultural heritage property, demonstrated that greater attention must be given to strengthening social and environmental considerations throughout the preparation of technical designs and the implementation phase. Lessons learned enclosed and Final Report.

8. Were grievance mechanisms available to project-affected people and were grievances (if any) addressed to ensure any perceived harm was effectively mitigated?

☐ 3: Project-affected people actively informed of UNDP's Corporate Accountability Mechanism (SRM/SECU) and how to access it. If the project was categorized as High or Moderate Risk through the SESP, a project -level grievance mechanism was in place and project affected people informed. If grievances were received, they were effectively addressed in accordance with SRM Guidance. (all must be true)

☒ 2: Project-affected people have been informed of UNDP's Corporate Accountability Mechanism and how to access it. If the project is categorized as High Risk through the SESP, a project -level grievance mechanism is in place and project affected people informed. If grievances have been received they are responded to but face challenges in arriving at a resolution. Select this option for SESP Exempted projects.

☐ 1: Project-affected people was not informed of UNDP's Corporate Accountability Mechanism. If grievances were received, they were not responded to. (any may be true)

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

The grievance mechanisms were in place in accordance with corporate standards and procedures. However, one of the lessons learned was to develop new manners of grievance mechanisms that would include all partners and beneficiaries. Lessons learned enclosed and Final Report.

Management & Monitoring

Status: Complete

Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory

9. Was the project's M&E Plan adequately implemented?

☒ 3: The project had a comprehensive and costed M&E plan. Baselines, targets and milestones were fully populated. Progress data against indicators in the project's RRF was reported regularly using credible data sources and collected according to the frequency stated in the Plan, including sex disaggregated data as relevant. Any evaluations conducted, if relevant, fully meet decentralized evaluation standards, including gender UNEG standards. Lessons learned, included during evaluations and/or After-Action Reviews, were used to take corrective actions when necessary. (all must be true)

☐ 2: The project costed M&E Plan, and most baselines and targets were populated. Progress data against indicators in the project's RRF was collected on a regular basis, although there was may be some slippage in following the frequency stated in the Plan and data sources was not always reliable. Any evaluations conducted, if relevant, met most decentralized evaluation standards. Lessons learned were captured but were used to take corrective actions. (all must be true)

☐ 1: The project had M&E Plan, but costs were not clearly planned and budgeted for, or were unrealistic. Progress data was not regularly collected against the indicators in the project's RRF. Evaluations did not meet decentralized evaluation standards. Lessons learned were rarely captured and used. Select this option also if the project did not have an M&E plan.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

M&E Plan as part of project document and was regularly updated in the system.

10. Did the project's governance mechanism (i.e., the project board or equivalent) function as intended?

☒ 3: The project's governance mechanism operated well, and was a model for other projects. It met in the agreed frequency stated in the project document and the minutes of the meetings were all on file. There was regular (at least annual) progress reporting to the project board or equivalent on results, risks and opportunities. It is clear that the project board explicitly reviewed and used evidence, including

progress data, knowledge, lessons and evaluations, as the basis for informing management decisions (e.g., change in strategy, approach, work plan.) (all must be true to select this option)

☐ 2: The project's governance mechanism met in the agreed frequency and minutes of the meeting are on file. A project progress report was submitted to the project board or equivalent at least once per year, covering results, risks and opportunities. (both must be true to select this option)

☐ 1: The project's governance mechanism did not meet in the frequency stated in the project document over the past year and/or the project board or equivalent was not functioning as a decision-making body for the project as intended.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

The Project Management Board (PMB) changed several times during project implementation. This resulted in the need for the project to continuously adapt to new strategic directions and shifting priorities. In addition, the lack of institutional memory further impeded effective decision-making and continuity. Yet the project team succeeded in engaging all the relevant stakeholders on regular basis. The last Management Board meeting took place in March, at which it was concluded that the remaining funds from the Creative Montenegro project should be transferred to the Strengthening the Cultural Heritage Management System (SCHMS) project, given the complementary nature of the two initiatives. As recorded in the official Minutes of the meeting, and noting that information on both projects, including their objectives and activities, had been adopted by the Government of Montenegro, the Ministry proposed that all remaining available funds from Creative Montenegro be redirected to the budget of the Strengthening the Cultural Heritage Management System project. The proposal was unanimously endorsed by all members of the Management Board.

The transfer of funds was executed towards the end of the 2025, once all necessary technical and procedural conditions were met, including the completion of all contracted payments and the clearance of relevant governance and financial requirements (GMS, DPC, etc.). Following the transfer, the Creative Montenegro project was formally and operationally closed in the system, in full compliance with UNDP procedures and in line with the provisions set out in the approved Project Document (PRODOC). Project board meeting minutes attached.

11. Were risks to the project adequately monitored and managed?

☐ 3: The project monitored risks every quarter and consulted with the key stakeholders, security advisors, to identify continuing and emerging risks to assess if the main assumptions remained valid. There is clear evidence that relevant management plans and mitigating measures were fully implemented to address each key project risk and were updated to reflect the latest risk assessment. (all must be true)

☒ 2: The project monitored risks every year, as evidenced by an updated risk log. Some updates were made to management plans and mitigation measures.

☐ 1: The risk log was not updated as required. There was may be some evidence that the project monitored risks that may affected the project's achievement of results, but there is no explicit evidence that management actions were taken to mitigate risks.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

The project risks were monitored and updated regularly in the system risk log.

Efficient

Status: Complete

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

12. Adequate resources were mobilized to achieve intended results. If not, management decisions were taken to adjust expected results in the project's results framework.

☒ Yes

☐ No

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

Yes, adequate resources were mobilized and intended results were achieved. Final report enclosed.

13. Were project inputs procured and delivered on time to efficiently contribute to results?

☐ 3: The project had a procurement plan and kept it updated. The project quarterly reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true)

☒ 2: The project had updated procurement plan. The project annually reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true)

☐ 1: The project did not have an updated procurement plan. The project team may or may not have reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs regularly, however management actions were not taken to address them.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

Given the challenges of changing of the Gov's priorities, most of the project inputs were procured and delivered on time. The project team regularly updated procurement plan in the system.

14. Was there regular monitoring and recording of cost efficiencies, taking into account the expected quality of results?

- ☐ 3: There is evidence that the project regularly reviewed costs against relevant comparators (e.g., other projects or country offices) or industry benchmarks to ensure the project maximized results delivered with given resources. The project actively coordinated with other relevant ongoing projects and initiatives (UNDP or other) to ensure complementarity and sought efficiencies wherever possible (e.g. joint activities.) (both must be true)
- ☒ 2: The project monitored its own costs and gave anecdotal examples of cost efficiencies (e.g., spending less to get the same result,) but there was no systematic analysis of costs and no link to the expected quality of results delivered. The project coordinated activities with other projects to achieve cost efficiency gains.
- ☐ 1: There is little or no evidence that the project monitored its own costs and considered ways to save money beyond following standard procurement rules.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

Given the political instability and the numerous challenges encountered during the execution project activities, the overall effectiveness of the project was impacted to a certain extent. These experiences can nevertheless serve as important lessons learned for future projects.

Effective

Status: Complete

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

15. Was the project on track and delivered its expected outputs?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

Yes, the project delivered expected outputs. Final Report enclosed

16. Were there regular reviews of the work plan to ensure that the project was on track to achieve the desired results, and to inform course corrections if needed?

- ☐ 3: Quarterly progress data informed regular reviews of the project work plan to ensure that the activities implemented were most likely to achieve the desired results. There is evidence that data and lessons learned (including from evaluations /or After-Action Reviews) were used to inform course corrections, as needed. Any necessary budget revisions were made. (both must be true)
- ☒ 2: There was at least one review of the work plan per year with a view to assessing if project activities were on track to achieving the desired development results (i.e., outputs.) There may or may not be evidence that data or lessons learned were used to inform the review(s). Any necessary budget revisions have been made.
- ☐ 1: While the project team may have reviewed the work plan at least once over the past year to ensure outputs were delivered on time, no link was made to the delivery of desired development results. Select this option also if no review of the work plan by management took place.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

Regular updates were presented and discussed at Project Board meetings. A review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews indicated that amendments to the work plan contributed to improved project efficiency and demonstrated flexibility and adaptive management in response to the country's dynamic political environment.

17. Were the targeted groups, and particularly those marginalized, vulnerable and left further behind (LNOB), systematically identified and engaged, prioritizing the marginalized and excluded, to ensure results were achieved as expected?

- ☐ 3: The project targeted specific groups and/or geographic areas, identified by using credible data sources on their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. There is clear evidence that the targeted

groups were reached as intended. The project engaged regularly with targeted groups over the past year to assess whether they benefited as expected and adjustments were made if necessary, to refine targeting. (all must be true)

- ☒ 2: The project targeted specific groups and/or geographic areas, based on some evidence of their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. Some evidence is provided to confirm that project beneficiaries are members of the targeted groups. There was some engagement with beneficiaries in the past year to assess whether they were benefiting as expected. (all must be true)
- ☐ 1: The project did not report on specific targeted groups. There is no evidence to confirm that project beneficiaries are populations have capacity needs or are deprived and/or excluded from development opportunities relevant to the project area of work. There is some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they benefited as expected, but it was limited or did not occurred in the past year.
- ☐ Not Applicable

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

The project beneficiaries include youth and women, through planning, designing, establishment of hubs and similar approaches.

18. If there is a digital or data technology solution in the project: have technology and data risks been addressed specifically for closure, or continued use by partners or UNDP?

- ☐ 3: Yes, a) the implementation and closure followed good practices, such as UNDP's digital standards and data principles; b) technology sustainability risks are addressed: hosting, licenses, intellectual property, data ownership, code documentation, or partner capacity (operations, maintenance and continued improvement); and c) post project scalability has been considered: digital public goods or reusability for other UNDP units. (All must be true)
- ☐ 2: Specific technology and data risks have been partially addressed for project closure, next to Standard UNDP sustainability practices and project risk management.
- ☐ 1: Standard UNDP sustainability practices and project risk management are applied, but no specific practices to address technology or data risks are followed.
- ☒ The project did not utilize a data or digital technology solution.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

UNDP's digital standards and data principles were followed continuously.

Sustainability & National Ownership

Status: Complete

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

19. Were stakeholders and national partners fully engaged in the decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the project?

- ☐ 3: Only national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) were used to fully implement and monitor the project. All relevant stakeholders and partners were fully and actively engaged in the process, playing a lead role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (both must be true)
- ☒ 2: National systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) were used to implement and monitor the project (such as country office support or project systems) were also used, if necessary. All relevant stakeholders and partners were actively engaged in the process, playing an active role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (both must be true)
- ☐ 1: There was relatively limited or no engagement with national stakeholders and partners in the decision-making, implementation and/or monitoring of the project.
- ☐ Not Applicable

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

All relevant stakeholders and partners, Government counterparts, representatives of Municipalities and relevant institutions, Media, Individuals (Artists, Creators) were actively engaged throughout the project cycle, playing an active role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring.

20. Were there regular monitoring of changes in capacities and performance of institutions and systems relevant to the project, as needed, and were the implementation arrangements⁸ adjusted according to changes in partner capacities?

- ☐ 3: Changes in capacities and performance of national institutions and systems were assessed/monitored using clear indicators, rigorous methods of data collection and credible data sources including relevant HACT assurance activities. Implementation arrangements were formally reviewed and adjusted, if needed, in agreement with partners according to changes in partner capacities. (all must be true)
- ☒ 2: Aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems were monitored by the project using indicators and reasonably credible data sources including relevant HACT assurance activities. Some adjustment was made to implementation

arrangements if needed to reflect changes in partner capacities. (all must be true)

- ☐ 1: Some aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems were monitored by the project, however changes to implementation arrangements were not considered. Also select this option if changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems were not monitored by the project.
- ☐ Not Applicable

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

Regular monitoring activities were carried out throughout project implementation, accompanied by targeted capacity-building exercises. These efforts not only ensured effective oversight of project progress but also strengthened the skills and capabilities of key stakeholders, enhancing their ability to manage and sustain cultural heritage initiatives beyond the project's duration.

21. Were the transition and phase-out arrangements were reviewed and adjusted according to progress (including financial commitment and capacity).

- ☐ 3: The project's governance mechanism regularly reviewed the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project remained on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan. The plan was implemented as planned by the end of the project, taking into account any adjustments made during implementation. (both must be true)
- ☒ 2: There was a review of the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project remained on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan.
- ☐ 1: The project may have had a sustainability plan but there was no review of this strategy after it was developed. Also select this option if the project did not have a sustainability strategy.

Evidence (Enter a short explanation or upload a document that provides evidence for your response)

Potential challenges to the sustainability of the project are associated with the evolving strategic priorities of the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Government of Montenegro. Nevertheless, investing in relationships and partnerships has proven crucial for sustaining project outcomes. The ability to engage effectively in policy dialogue, together with the high level of trust and commitment from national partners to collaborate with UNDP, reflects the long-term value of these strategic relationship-building efforts.