



**MINISTRY OF URBAN AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE

**COMPETITIVENESS, RATING,
RECOGNITION AND ACCOUNTABILITY
FRAMEWORK**



**Addis Ababa
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Remarks from the Minister

I recall that one of the Pillars of our Construction Industry Reform and Transformation Road Map is ***Pillar No. IV: Business, Competitiveness and Sustainability***. An introduction of assessment and measurement of competitiveness; and subsequent recognition of best performers across the industry in multiple categories becomes relevant, timely and urgent. Subsequently, this **Competitiveness Rating, Recognition and Accountability Framework** is produced and developed with the involvement of senior professionals and officials. The aim is to identify competitive companies and developing a competitive industry through careful assessment of their establishment and performance overtime, measured against the logical set of their competitors based on set dimensions of business performance. In this process, Clients, Contractors and Consultants would be considered with the objective of assessing how well the Industry is performing according to the set criteria.

As Ministry, our role, this time, is to consistently ensure that the Stakeholders are on board in every aspect of our endeavor in transforming the industry under auspices of: Construction Industry Transformation Initiative. In this process, I am pragmatic and realize what it takes to materialize and successfully implement the Road Map. As Industry we need to accept new ideas and fully committed to change the way our Construction Industry has been performing so as we can meaningfully contribute to our prosperity and building our nation. In all our endeavors, we are aware, recognize, consolidate the achievements and gains made so far.

**HE Chaltu Sani,
Minister, Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure**

Preface and Acknowledgments

The approach used to develop this Framework has been to closely follow the policy direction set out by the Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure; and DCI Reform and Transformation Road Map. It is drafted with the intention to accelerate the implementation of the Policy and the Road Map at national and industry level. A good deal of categories of literature mainly: i) Levels of Competitiveness of the Ethiopian Road Construction Industry; ii) Business performance: In Search of Excellence, Jumping the S-Curve, Good to Great, and Peak Performance; iii) Competitiveness: On Competition, The Competitive Advantage of Nations, Understanding Michael Porter, Assessing Business Excellence; and iv) Ethiopia: Ten Years Perspective Plan, Medemer/Synergy, etc are refereed/consulted.

The Framework should not be seen as fixed or final. The development approach adopted should be flexible throughout the definition, the planning and the implementation process and be adaptable to changes in economic and wider environmental parameters.

However, being able to track and demonstrate progress towards our vision is vital to ongoing commitment and belief in the vision by stakeholders inside and outside of the sector. An effective performance measurement system can: i) track progress over time; ii) identify issues or challenges; iii) inform policy and decision making; iv) help to set measurable targets for performance improvement; and v) help drive behavioral change amongst sector members. Full engagement of the Industry actors is important here. With better and improved engagement of Stakeholders at different levels, every effort and framework including this one will be better implemented and add value to the wider initiative.

This kind of initiative does not begin-nor last- without the direction and dedication of key officials at the Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure. Once direction is given by HE Chaltu Sani, the Minister, the Team working in this Framework have enjoyed the support and attention needed to come up with a comprehensive and yet flexible deliverables. The contribution and dedication of professionals have been exceptional and need to be acknowledged. Documents and studies consulted in developing the Framework are provided at the end of this document.

**Yetmgeta Asrat, State Minister,
Chairman, Steering Committee of
Construction Industry Transformation Initiative**

I. Background

1.1 Definition

The Domestic Construction Industry is defined as made of: Foreign companies with 51% Ethiopian ownership and registered in Ethiopia, National Private Companies; National Public Companies (state companies); the administrative force-accounts construction and maintenance units of the Road Authorities.

Construction Industry includes Construction Contractors, Consultants for Design, Supervision or Quality Controls and Suppliers involved in the process of identifying, designing, constructing and supervising road activities.

Competitiveness: the relative state of efficiency and capability of those construction firms operating in Ethiopian construction sector measured by selected competitiveness parameters.

Higher-level Contractors: Companies registered as Grade 1 to 3 using the current registration system used by MIU/Ethiopian Construction Authority.

Medium-level Contractors: Companies registered as Grade 4 and 5 using the current registration system used by MIU.

Labour Based and Small scale Contractors are all companies registered as Grade 6 to 10.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Framework

At the outset it is important to clearly define the purpose of a measurement framework: that is, to define why we are measuring performance and what the data will be used for. This will determine the breadth, depth, and nature of the measurement process. The aim is to identify competitive companies and developing a competitive industry through careful assessment of their establishment and performance measured against the logical set of their competitors based on set dimensions of business performance. In this process all actors including Clients, Contractors and Consultants would be considered with the objective of assessing how well the Industry is performing according to the set criteria.

The objectives of the Rating are:

- To introduce and launch “Performance and Excellence Initiatives”: Institutionalizing a national Construction Excellence Initiative that will foster competitiveness through performance bench-marking, recognition of best performers, and incentives for innovation, sustainability, and quality across multiple categories.
- To improve the speed and quality of completed construction projects with much emphasis on time, cost, management and responsiveness to client needs,
- Adopt contract strategies that are more likely to promote improvements in integrated project performance to provide more predictable final costs and completion date,
- Improve professionalism of all those involved in procurement and managing construction so that good practice is more widely accepted and applied within the construction industry, and
- Adopt more innovative approach to improve value for money and speed of performance in construction sector.

II. A Pathway for Competitiveness

2.1 The Premise

The Construction Industry and individual firms in Ethiopia must strive to forcefully aim and address the fundamentals below. The company/business who will prosper are those who:

- Have superior intelligence (knowledge base),
- Are capable of managing advanced technologies,
- Respond rapidly to change, and
- Accomplish its works with efficiency and effectiveness.

In view of the foregoing, the current situation of the construction industry, the amount of resources invested so far and expected workloads across the nation, the challenges and time spent by high-leadership in following up projects, and major goals of the Industry underlie a simple and compelling premise that applying elements of competitiveness and excellence are essential and must be undertaken for the long-term benefit of the nation and the construction sector in particular.

2.2 Competitive Construction Industry

For a construction industry, competitiveness refers to the ability to, in the long-term, satisfy the sophisticated demands of companies, clients and society respectively and simultaneously, while acting under free and fair market conditions, exposed to an international market environment. Several aspects of the definition need to be highlighted.

- (There are three stakeholders of an industry; the companies constituting the industry, represented by shareholders and employees, the clients buying its products or services and the society in which the industry is operating. A truly competitive industry satisfies all three parties[1];
- An industry must stand the test of an international market environment to truly be called competitive; and
- It is important to underline that companies, clients and society together shape their own business environment and the conditions for competitiveness. Thus, a competitive industry requires a competitive business environment which embraces three perspectives with potentially conflicting interests[2].
- [1] The companies and their shareholders will get sufficient profit on investment and the employees will experience high employee satisfaction. Clients will see their needs fulfilled and for society, a competitive construction industry will contribute, by taxes and job creation, to economic well being and by environmental and social responsibility to societal well being.

It is appreciated that a single focused construction industry development “template” for national construction goals implementation would be an impossibility to either develop or execute. What is needed and could, in fact, attain the desired goal results was a sector focused approach that enables the focused application of sectoral expertise to develop, prioritize and execute the sector relevant goals. We have to, however, agree and commit ourselves to undertake significant actions in order to pull together the diverse, even contentious, interests present in each sector. In the process, each sector should have in mind that the local construction industry should base its activities/business with the overarching goal of being competitive; having this Framework and excellence vision in mind.

2.3 Major Goals of the Industry

Building up the DCI will require time and continuous effort, and should be implemented smoothly and in phase. A 30-Year road map has been prepared by Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure along with the on-going 10 Year's Perspective Plan. The goals would be practical if:-

- Were clearly achievable and clearly articulated;
- Anchored in reasonable implementation schemes;
- Targeted viable initial users/actors; and
- Embedded appropriate incentives and recognition.

As a result, a modified Road Map is designed with different perspectives to lead the industry in a structured manner with a long-term plan. Accordingly, the Road Map is modified and categorized into four phases with clear stages of development targeting to ensure efficiency and competitiveness with ultimate objective of developing an innovative DCI.

Table 1: DCI Transformation Road map (Modified)

Phase	Period	Stage	Explanation
Phase I	2021–2024	Assessment, Awareness	Diagnostic phase addressing DCI's inefficiencies: institutional fragmentation, administrative malpractices, weak leadership, low technical capacity, and informal practices.
Phase II	2025–2026	Engagement, Institutional Strengthening & Image Building	Establishment of enabling conditions, reform-oriented policies, modern regulations, harmonized standards, structured stakeholder engagement, and launch of rating frameworks.
Phase III	2027–2040	Efficient and Competitive DCI	Emergence of a result-driven, accountable industry delivering quality, cost-effective, and timely infrastructure. At least 20 domestic firms able to compete internationally.
Phase IV	2040–2050	Innovative and Globally Recognized DCI	Mature, technology-led construction sector digitized, resilient, green, and export-ready making Ethiopia a model of excellence and innovation in Africa and beyond.

Source: DCI Reform and Transformation Road Map, June 2025.

2.4 Prerequisites

The Ministry bears in mind that transforming the Sector (the contracting institutions and the domestic construction industry) and realize the expected result could require a longer time and effort. Thus, the successful implementation of the initiative, achieving national construction goals, would require, from each sector and from construction industry as a whole, that:

- Industry leaders provide the necessary leadership and resources;
- Respective sectors commit to support and succeeded;
- A viable industry oversight body be established;
- Barriers to implementation be recognized, discussed and consistently resolved; and
- Implementation of the concepts and segments of the initiative objectively and regularly assessed, refined and reported.


III. Theoretical & Conceptual Framework of Competitiveness Framework

Theoretical and conceptual framework of the competitiveness framework adopted elsewhere are reviewed. This is important to understand and define the relations between the variables used to measure competitiveness, guide this exercise, whilst at the same time determining what elements to be considered in analyzing and measuring performance of the Ethiopian construction industry.

There are large numbers of parameters determining the success of contractors, whose organization structures and governance have become more and more complicated. However, stakeholders in construction can only manage and understand a certain number of factors simultaneously. In addition, the competitiveness parameters applied elsewhere are inherently competing for the resources and sometimes cumbersome to inspect them. They are also dependent on the socio-economic status of countries. Nevertheless, the available parameters might be different when applying to Ethiopian situation, a country whose construction business level is thought to be undeveloped and short period of history compared to most countries where such parameters are developed and tested. Hence, it is important to explore the characteristics of developing countries and in particular to the construction industry and their implications to the development of competitiveness parameters.

There are many KPIs that can be utilized in measuring construction performance including specific ones relating to productivity, safety, and quality. The method of identifying the most significant KPIs which will objectively help evaluate contractor performance in particular could be categorized into six broad heads based on various characteristic features. These are:

- Project-related factors. These are the specific pre-selected success factors during project construction which essentially deal with the type, size and complexity of construction projects and other related aspects. These characteristic features are those not attributable to the stakeholders, supply chains or the project environment;
- Client-related factors which are primarily concerned with the client's knowledge and experience with different type of projects as well as his project management capabilities;
- Consultant-related factors which cover aspects pertaining to the preparation of design documents, drawing details, changes in design documents, specifications of the project, etc.;
- Contractor-related factors which are responsible for quality management practices adopted by the contractors, their technical expertise, site management and supervision skills, etc.;
- Supply chain-related factors encompass those factors relating to the selection of suppliers, procurement of right materials and equipment, availability of labour, etc.; and
- External environment-related factors which deal with the economic, social, political, technological and ecological environment affecting the success of a construction project.



These classifications are necessary because apart from the preselected success factors that are specific to each project, specific stakeholders have different perspectives towards success of construction projects. They also play different roles in ensuring the success of a construction project. Further, the supply chain activities required during construction are not under the control of these stakeholders and hence their effect has to be considered separately. Similarly, every project is constructed within an environment and therefore, it is important to consider the effect of such an environment (physical and ecological, economic, social, technological) on successful completion of construction projects. The performance evaluation framework proposed for Ethiopian construction industry attempts to consider these aspects. The framework will not merely concentrates to evaluate contractors' role in construction projects but includes the two main actors; Client and Consultant in limited way. However, it is good to realize that every framework including this one is not without limitations.

The review of literature helped to develop the theoretical and conceptual framework of the competitiveness framework. It is learned that the issue of competitiveness measurement cannot be explained with a single metric and any indices. It is also true that indices and subsequent rankings as any other exercise meant to reduce systemic elements into numerical representations and thus have their own fault lines. No level of measurement, aggregation and ranking precision could have the ability to exactly tell what is happening on the ground. Yet, indices, with all their problems, are helpful instruments of decision and policy-making. Considering the fact that every numeric representation entails some sort of error of commission, it is natural to treat it with some doubt and cautiousness.

IV. Competitiveness Rating Framework

4.1 Rating Approach

Defining the very term, Competitiveness, for one, is a challenge. Figuring out an approach and methodology that could consistently and repeatedly identify competitive firm/industry is another. And then determining what gets competitive company/entity into that position and keep them there is still another. The other important point in this process is learning and consideration. In Ethiopia, in Construction Industry, the important consideration is that Competitiveness is relative: Best Performing Companies and Clients can be judged only against low performance. Next, it needs a rigorous approach to assessing Competitiveness, to start at point and after numerous iterations, to develop a one that has withstand critical scrutiny.

What follows is a chart that sets out the results to be achieved by every project and business entity, associated stages and events together with measurable Performance Indicators. The purpose of Performance Indicators is to provide an unbiased mechanism for measuring and monitoring performance, in this case through the duration of a project. It is proposed that a relatively small number of indicators be agreed which will provide focused information on progress of key elements of the project.

4.2 Rating/Evaluation Process and Parameters

In selecting dimensions and parameters, a delicate balance between simplicity and comprehensiveness is maintained. A client, contractor and consultant performance evaluation report is an important document to review when assessing the success of a project. It's the perfect way to find out how well our contractors and consultants are doing and if any areas need improvement or further support. Knowing what to include in a evaluation report can help to make sure it meets all of the expectations and captures vital data accurately.

4.2.1 Considerations

- As the companies and projects are too much, only higher grade companies (say, Grade I to III) are candidates for Rating;
- Complex system too costly and time consuming, creates complaints, require more effort, create confusion and difficult for multiple parties to clearly understand for both agencies and contractors involved in the Rating process. Therefore, use of large quantity technical information is avoided;
- Visit of the main office of better ranking Contractors and Consultants to have strategic discussion with the top management might be required from time to time; and
- Contractors and consultants to submit their recent audit report showing their financial position (turnover and profit).

4.2.2 Dimensions and Parameters for Contractors, Consultants and Clients

Here, we look at what dimensions should be included in Rating all parties and why they're important for business operations and their rationale for their inclusion:

Table 2: Contractors and Consultants Rating Framework

No	Dimensions	Weight (%)	Description	Indicators	Unit of Measurement	Source of Data	Remarks
I	Performance	60%	Delivery of projects relative to contract timeline, cost efficiency, quality, safeguard compliance, and stakeholder satisfaction.	Accomplishment	%	Project/ Client record	Performance is compared against peer group using a weighted average index.
II	Organizational Set-up & Management	10%	Quality of corporate governance, adoption of modern systems (e.g., ISO, digital tools), TQM practices, and strategic planning.	Business Excellence	% / Score	Company profile, survey, supporting docs	Evaluated using a standardized self-assessment + verification model. Must reflect capacity for quality and governance excellence.
III	Profitability / Construction Turnover	10%	Annual revenue generated from core construction activities (excluding unrelated business lines).	Net Turnover Ratio	%	Independent audit reports	Must be externally audited. Historic consistency and growth rate are also factored in trend scoring.

IV	Market Share	5%	Number and scale of current active or recently completed high-value projects in the public and private sectors.	Project Volume	No. / Value	Contract records, completion certificates	Segmented by value thresholds. Weighted for diversity of clients and geographic distribution.
V	Regional & Global Participation/ Experience	5%	Experience with donor-funded or cross-border projects, demonstrating exposure to international standards and procedures.	International Scope	No. / Project cost	Donor records, contract documents	Includes any project governed by international procurement rules or executed abroad.
VI	Longevity and Growth (Experience)	5%	Years of sustainable operation and evidence of organizational growth through cycles, mergers, or diversification.	Years / Growth Index	No. / %	Client letters, audit reports	Minimum five years of operation. Growth in employee size, capital, or technology also considered.
VII	Readiness and Proactive for Change	5%	Evidence of responsiveness, including innovation, digital transformation, use of BIM/ERP, and continuous improvement culture.	Innovation Index	No. / Score	Digital reports, internal logs, ISO, etc.	Technology use (AI, automation), process upgrades, and change readiness are verified using a checklist + peer review.

Table 3: Clients Rating Framework

No	Dimensions	Weight (%)	Description	Indicators	Unit of Measurement	Source of Data	Remarks
I	Performance of Projects	30%	Performance in managing and completing construction projects within planned timeline, budget, quality standards, and safeguard policies.	Project Accomplishment	%	Project implementation reports	Measured against initial project baseline and milestones. Includes delays, cost overruns, quality compliance, and environmental/social safeguards.
II	Institutional Set-up and Management	20%	Strength of internal systems, corporate structure, project management mechanisms, and adoption of business excellence models (e.g., ISO, Kaizen).	Organization Excellence	Score / %	Profile, self-assessment survey, documentation	Scored using a validated assessment tool. Includes leadership capacity, reporting structure, risk management tools, and internal control systems.

III	Transparency	20%	Presence and use of codified manuals, procurement guidelines, and standardized contract management practices that promote fairness and compliance.	Systems Transparency Index	%	Procurement and contract records	Includes audit trail availability, tender openness, adherence to procurement thresholds, and publication of award results.
IV	Stakeholder & Customer Management	20%	Level of stakeholder engagement, fairness in decision-making, payment efficiency, grievance redress mechanisms, and reputation among contractors.	Satisfaction Rating	%	Independent stakeholder survey	Includes perception of timely communication, responsiveness, inclusivity, and dispute resolution.
V	Readiness and Proactive for Change	10%	Willingness and capacity to implement reforms, adopt new technologies (ERP, e-procurement), launch innovations, and track internal improvements.	Innovation & Responsiveness	Score / %	Assessment forms, ISO certificates, reports	Based on introduction of digital tools, modernization efforts, ISO or equivalent certifications, and proactive performance reviews.

4.3 Accountability Framework

Accountability is a cornerstone of the Competitiveness Rating and Recognition system. While ratings and recognition are designed to reward excellence, accountability mechanisms ensure that poor performance, non-compliance, and malpractices are addressed with integrity, transparency, and fairness. This is essential for building trust, enforcing reform, and upholding professional ethics in Ethiopia's construction industry.

4.3.1 Principles of Accountability

The framework is grounded in the following accountability principles:

- **Transparency:** Clear criteria, scoring systems, and outcomes must be published and accessible.
- **Responsiveness:** Stakeholders should be able to submit feedback, contest results, and report violations.
- **Answerability:** All rated entities must justify performance failures or inconsistencies in reporting.
- **Corrective Action:** Mechanisms must be in place to enforce penalties and mandate corrective actions.

4.3.2 Accountability Mechanisms by Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder	Accountability Mechanism
Contractors & Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May face performance audits if scoring below threshold for 2 consecutive years.• May be temporarily suspended from public contracts for falsified data.• Required to submit Corrective Action Plans for recurring underperformance.
Clients (Public Institutions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to annual peer reviews on project management integrity.• Poor transparency or stakeholder scores may lead to public disclosure or institutional reviews by oversight bodies.• Delay in payment or biased procurement flagged for administrative review.
Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must publish annual Rating Report Cards and Framework Evaluation Reports.• Rating office and governance units will be evaluated through external performance audits every 3 years.

4.3.3 Grievance Redress and Appeals

- A formal **Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)** will be established at the Ministry level.
- Stakeholders can **submit complaints** or **appeal scores** within 30 days of rating publication.
- An **independent Appeals Committee** composed of public and private sector representatives will adjudicate appeals within 60 days.
- Final decisions will be published to uphold transparency.

4.3.4 Sanctions and Remedies

Violation	Sanction
Submission of false performance data	1-2 year disqualification from government contracts
Repeated poor performance (<40% score 3 years)	Mandatory technical audits + capacity-building participation
Corruption-related practices (proven)	Immediate blacklisting and referral to legal authorities
Client abuse of procurement processes	Ministry-led investigation and public censure or referral to audit bodies

4.3.5 Public Disclosure and Enforcement

- All **ratings, sanctions, and corrective actions** will be published annually on the Ministry's website.
- The Ministry will release a **DCI Accountability Bulletin** biannually to highlight progress, penalties, and lessons learned.
- Anonymous whistleblower channels will be created and maintained as part of the **National Anti-Corruption Framework** integration.

4.4 Rating and Recognition Governance

The process of developing a measurement framework is as important as the framework itself. Any person, group, or organization that will be required to provide data or will be affected by decisions related to the measurement framework should be engaged in the development of the framework. One of the contributing factors for the start-up and ongoing success of Rating and Award exercise, is a strong industry engagement process.

In the realm of rating systems, Rating Governance would also play a crucial role in ensuring the quality and integrity of ratings. It encompasses a set of principles and practices that guide the process of assigning ratings to major parties in construction sector. Rating Governance aims to provide transparency, reliability, and consistency in the rating process, enabling users to make informed decisions based on trustworthy information.

For society, it offers assurance that the ratings they rely on are unbiased and accurate. For businesses, it establishes a level playing field and encourages fair competition. Regulators and policymakers recognize Rating Governance as a mechanism to protect consumers and promote market efficiency.

Some key considerations are given below:

- Rating Criteria given above is only preliminary and initial. These criteria may vary depending on the industry or sector being rated and or from time to time.

- **Rating Methodology:** A robust Rating Governance framework encompasses a well-defined rating methodology. This methodology outlines the process of collecting relevant data, analyzing it, and deriving ratings based on predefined approach which will be made known to stakeholders to ensure consistency and objectivity in the rating process.
- **Independent Oversight or Committee** to maintain the integrity of the rating process may be established to review and validate the ratings assigned by rating office at MUI. This oversight helps prevent conflicts of interest and ensures the accuracy and reliability of ratings.
- **Transparency and Disclosure** is an important aspect of governance including providing clear explanations of the rating methodology, criteria, and any potential limitations or biases.
- The Rating is undertaken by relevant office of the Ministry and presented for review and approval by Construction Industry Council. The result of the Rating would also be reviewed and endorsed by the Committee which would be chaired by senior official of MUI and includes DGs of ECA, CMI, Chair persons of Contractors and Consultants Associations.

V. Stakeholders Engagement, Information Sharing and Publicity

It is likely that one of the primary reasons for the quality decline in infrastructure works that has been experienced over the years is the absence of information sharing and broad public understanding of the role and impact of infrastructure in everyday life, and commitment of stakeholders. How can this be changed in implementing this Road Map:

- A strong oversight structure, participation requirements;
- Hard-hitting, factual training/education;
- Leadership participation/buy-in programs in federal, regional and local levels; and
- Public outreach for program support.

Engagement is an ongoing process of information sharing, seeking feedback, and joint decision making. Engagement should produce collective agreement on key outcomes for the sector and ensure that the framework reflects the values and goals of sector members, while leaving room for sub-sector/sector members from having their own specific goals and measurement priorities. Creating an effective and sustained performance measurement system relies on data sharing, which in turn relies on trust. Trust is not only critical between sector and government but between stakeholders within the industry.

MUI will continue consultations to further enhance the methodology. The CI Road Map report presents information about the initiatives. The methodology will be subject to refinements based on the feedback of Stakeholders. Feedback received from stakeholders during dissemination activities will also be considered in the subsequent periods. Any changes or updates to the processes and methodology will be reported and published in updated versions of the Framework, available on the MUI website. The MUI will continue to have an open and transparent dialogue with stakeholders of the Industry and make relevant materials available on the website for everyone to consult through meetings, conferences, and public presentations.

VI. Way Forward and Planning Matrix

The success of the DCI Transformation Initiative in general and this Competitiveness Rating and Recognition program in particular depends, in the end, upon the ability of the initial implementation stakeholders to establish a compelling case for these goals, generate the requisite enthusiasm, commitment and participation especially from the large works implementers and develop effective implementation mechanism that ensure success. This Framework is an important step towards success, but nevertheless, only one aspect in a process; moreover it is a draft and preliminary Framework that will now be more closely evaluated and modified, as appropriate.

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