

LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES OF THE FOUNDATION CHAIRPERSON IN IMPROVING MADRASAH QUALITY AT MA AL- ISHLAH PULOKULON GROBOGAN

Mowafg Masuwd

University of Zawia, Libya

e-mail: masuwd@zu.edu.ly

Aliwan

STAI Walisembilan Semarang

e-mail: aliwan@setiaws.ac.id

Triana Hermawati

Universitas Alma Ata Yogyakarta

e-mail: trianahermakinting@gmail.com

Moch Choirudin

STAI Walisembilan Semarang

e-mail: mochchoirudin@setiaws.ac.id

Kamalun Ni'am

STAI Walisembilan Semarang

e-mail: kamalunniam@setiaws.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to examine in depth the leadership strategies of the foundation chairperson in improving the quality of madrasah education at MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon, Grobogan. The focus of the study is directed toward the leadership patterns implemented, the application of leadership strategies in madrasah governance and management, the role of the foundation chairperson in enhancing teacher professionalism, the development of facilities and infrastructure as well as institutional image, and the supporting and inhibiting factors in improving madrasah quality. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies, involving research subjects such as the foundation chairperson, madrasah principal, vice principals, teachers, and educational staff. Data analysis was conducted interactively using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, while data validity was ensured through triangulation and member checking.

The findings indicate that the leadership of the foundation chairperson at MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon, Grobogan is strategic, visionary, participatory, and grounded in Islamic values. These leadership strategies are reflected in the formulation of contextual and long-term-oriented visions and development policies, the strengthening of collaborative madrasah governance, the enhancement of teacher professionalism through structural and moral support, and the gradual and well-planned development of facilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, the foundation chairperson's leadership contributes to the establishment of a religious and professional work culture and strengthens the institutional image of the madrasah in the public sphere. Supporting factors include strong leadership commitment, alignment of vision between the foundation and the madrasah, and community support, while inhibiting factors consist of limited financial resources, suboptimal data-based evaluation, and disparities in teacher competencies. This study affirms that the quality of the foundation chairperson's leadership plays a strategic role in improving madrasah quality in academic, managerial, and cultural dimensions..

Keywords: *Leadership Strategies of the Foundation Chairperson, Madrasah Quality*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara mendalam strategi kepemimpinan ketua yayasan dalam peningkatan kualitas madrasah di MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon Grobogan. Fokus penelitian diarahkan pada pola kepemimpinan yang diterapkan, implementasi strategi kepemimpinan dalam tata kelola dan manajemen madrasah, peran ketua yayasan dalam peningkatan profesionalisme pendidik, pengembangan sarana prasarana serta citra kelembagaan, dan faktor pendukung serta penghambat dalam peningkatan kualitas madrasah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan studi dokumentasi, dengan subjek penelitian meliputi ketua yayasan, kepala madrasah, wakil kepala madrasah, pendidik, dan tenaga kependidikan. Analisis data dilakukan secara interaktif dengan model Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña, serta keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi dan member checking. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan ketua Yayasan MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon Grobogan bersifat strategis, visioner, partisipatif, dan berlandaskan nilai-nilai keislaman. Strategi kepemimpinan tersebut tercermin dalam perumusan visi dan kebijakan pengembangan madrasah yang kontekstual dan berorientasi jangka panjang, penguatan tata kelola madrasah yang kolaboratif, peningkatan profesionalisme pendidik melalui dukungan struktural dan moral, serta pengembangan sarana prasarana secara bertahap dan terencana. Selain itu, kepemimpinan ketua yayasan juga berkontribusi dalam membangun budaya kerja religius dan profesional serta memperkuat citra kelembagaan madrasah di mata masyarakat. Faktor pendukung utama meliputi komitmen kepemimpinan yang kuat, kesamaan visi antara yayasan dan madrasah, serta dukungan masyarakat, sedangkan faktor penghambat meliputi keterbatasan sumber daya finansial, belum optimalnya evaluasi berbasis data, dan ketimpangan kompetensi pendidik. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa kualitas kepemimpinan ketua yayasan memiliki peran strategis dalam peningkatan kualitas madrasah secara akademik, manajerial, dan kultural.

Kata Kunci: *Strategi kepemimpinan ketua yayasan, kualitas madrasah*

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is a strategic process for transmitting noble values that function as guiding principles for human life, while simultaneously serving as a means to improve human destiny and civilization. Education does not take place solely within the formal spaces of educational institutions; rather, it is a lifelong process (*lifelong education*) that begins at birth and continues until the end of life (Tilaar, 2012). Through education, individuals are equipped with intellectual, moral, and spiritual capacities to confront the dynamics of life. Without education, the development of human civilization would experience stagnation or even regression in social, moral, and intellectual dimensions (Nata, 2016). Therefore, education plays a central role in developing human resources who are faithful, knowledgeable, ethical, and competitive.

In the Indonesian context as a religious nation, education particularly Islamic education faces a range of complex challenges, including low educational quality, weak graduate competitiveness, and persistent managerial problems, especially within private educational institutions. These conditions demand educational management that is professional, adaptive to change, and oriented toward continuous quality improvement (Mulyasa, 2015). Education cannot be entrusted solely to the government; rather, it constitutes a shared responsibility among the government, parents, and the wider community. Within private education, foundations play a strategic role as the primary organizers and policy directors of educational institutions (Hasbullah, 2013).

Private madrasahs in Indonesia are generally administered under educational foundations as legal entities responsible for educational provision. Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 28 of 2004 concerning Foundations stipulates that a foundation is a legal entity whose separated assets are designated to achieve social, religious, and humanitarian objectives. In the field of education, foundations function as strategic policy holders, institutional development directors, and primary parties responsible for the sustainability and quality of madrasahs (Sagala, 2013). Consequently, the quality of leadership exercised by the foundation chairperson becomes a key determinant in shaping policy direction, management effectiveness, and the overall quality of the madrasah.

Increasing parental expectations regarding the quality of educational processes, outputs, and outcomes have intensified competition among educational institutions, particularly private madrasahs. Parents have become increasingly selective in choosing educational institutions perceived to provide high-quality

educational services and to secure students' future prospects (Fattah, 2012). This situation requires madrasahs to adopt effective leadership and management strategies in order to sustain institutional existence while simultaneously improving educational quality. In this context, the foundation chairperson is expected not merely to perform administrative functions but also to possess a clear vision, innovative capacity, and transformative leadership in managing and developing the madrasahs under their supervision.

Educational quality is fundamentally influenced by the quality of the learning process conducted by educators. Therefore, efforts to improve madrasah quality cannot be separated from continuous guidance, supervision, and support for both madrasah principals and teachers. The foundation chairperson plays a strategic role in fostering a conducive working environment, enhancing teacher professionalism, and providing adequate educational facilities and infrastructure (Anwar & Jamal, 2021). Effective foundation leadership has a direct impact on improving institutional governance, learning quality, and the public image of the madrasah.

Nevertheless, empirical realities at MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon, Grobogan indicate that efforts to enhance madrasah quality continue to face several challenges. Preliminary observations reveal issues such as the suboptimal development of foundation leadership strategies for quality improvement, limited learning-support facilities and infrastructure, and the need for sustained strengthening of teacher professionalism. In addition, coordination between the foundation chairperson and madrasah management in planning and implementing quality improvement programs has not yet been fully systematic or measurable. These conditions have affected the madrasah's competitiveness in facing competition from other educational institutions in the Pulokulon District of Grobogan.

Previous studies have demonstrated that foundation leadership strategies significantly influence the quality improvement of educational institutions. Ridwan (2019) argues that foundation strategies in madrasah development encompass strengthening institutional management, enhancing teacher competence, and developing educational facilities and infrastructure. Meanwhile, Anwar and Jamal (2021) found that the leadership style and strategies of foundation chairpersons play a crucial role in fostering educator loyalty and commitment, which in turn affects institutional quality. However, these studies generally focus on managerial aspects in a broad sense and have not specifically examined the leadership strategies of foundation chairpersons in improving the quality of private Islamic senior secondary madrasahs (*madrasah aliyah*) within particular local contexts.

Based on these considerations, this study focuses on the leadership strategies of the foundation chairperson as a central actor in improving madrasah quality, employing a case study at MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon, Grobogan. This research aims to examine in depth the leadership strategies of the foundation chairperson, their implementation in madrasah management, and the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting madrasah quality improvement. Accordingly, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic education management scholarship and practically to the governance and quality enhancement of foundation-based private madrasahs

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena related to the leadership strategies of the foundation chairperson in improving madrasah quality, based on the perspectives of the research participants and the natural context in which the phenomena occur. This approach enables the researcher to explore meanings, processes, and leadership dynamics in a comprehensive and contextual manner (Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2018). The case study design was applied to intensively and holistically examine foundation leadership practices within a specific educational setting, namely MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon, Grobogan, as a bounded system defined by time, place, and particular social conditions (Yin, 2018).

The research was conducted at MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon, Grobogan, a private Islamic senior secondary school (madrasah aliyah) operating under the auspices of an Islamic educational foundation. The selection of this research site was based on the consideration that the madrasah is actively engaged in efforts to improve institutional quality and educational resources through the strategic role of the foundation chairperson in policy formulation and madrasah management. Research participants included the foundation chairperson, the madrasah principal, vice principals, teachers, administrative staff, and other relevant stakeholders involved in policy-making and the implementation of quality improvement initiatives. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby informants were deliberately chosen based on their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the management and development of madrasah quality (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out with the foundation chairperson and madrasah stakeholders to obtain

detailed information regarding leadership strategies, decision-making processes, and policies and programs implemented to improve madrasah quality. This interview technique allowed the researcher to obtain rich and in-depth data aligned with the focus of the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In addition, participatory observation was employed to directly observe foundation leadership practices, coordination patterns between the foundation and madrasah, and the working environment and organizational culture of the madrasah. Through observation, the researcher was able to capture empirical realities that may not always emerge through interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Document analysis involved the examination of official foundation and madrasah documents, including vision and mission statements, work programs, foundation policies, organizational structures, meeting minutes, and other supporting archives. Documentary data were used to corroborate and verify findings obtained from interviews and observations (Bowen, 2009).

Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously following the analytical model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The analytical process began with data reduction, involving the selection, focusing, and simplification of data relevant to the research objectives. The reduced data were then presented in the form of descriptive narratives, matrices, or thematic tables to facilitate interpretation and analysis. The final stage of analysis involved conclusion drawing and verification, whereby meanings, patterns, and relationships among the data were systematically formulated to address the research questions accurately and comprehensively.

To ensure data trustworthiness, this study employed triangulation techniques, including both source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from the foundation chairperson, madrasah principal, and teachers, while methodological triangulation involved cross-checking data from interviews, observations, and document analysis. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming research findings with participants to ensure alignment between the researcher's interpretations and the participants' experiences and intentions, thereby enhancing the credibility and validity of the qualitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This study was conducted in strict adherence to research ethics principles, including obtaining formal permission from the foundation and madrasah authorities, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, and using research data responsibly and solely for academic purposes and the advancement of scholarly knowledge (Creswell, 2014)

C. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Patterns of the Foundation Chairperson's Leadership Strategy in Improving Madrasah Quality

The findings indicate that the leadership pattern of the Chairperson of the MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon Grobogan Foundation is strategic, participatory, and grounded in Islamic values. This leadership orientation is not limited to the administrative management of the foundation but is directed toward strengthening madrasah quality in a comprehensive and sustainable manner. The foundation chairperson positions himself as a central figure capable of identifying the internal needs of the madrasah while simultaneously responding to external demands, such as changes in educational policy and evolving community expectations.

These findings are consistent with the theory of strategic leadership in education, which positions leaders as key actors in determining an institution's long-term direction through vision formulation, priority setting, and continuous change management (Davies & Davies, 2010). Within the madrasah context, strategic leadership extends beyond institutional goal attainment to include the internalization of Islamic educational values and mission.

The leadership strategy of the foundation chairperson is reflected in his ability to formulate a clear, realistic, and contextual vision and policy direction. The madrasah development vision is not treated merely as a normative statement but is translated into priority programs that address core educational aspects, such as improving learning quality, enhancing teacher professionalism, and strengthening students' Islamic character. This demonstrates proactive and visionary leadership, consistent with visionary leadership theory, which emphasizes a leader's capacity to translate abstract visions into concrete and measurable actions (Northouse, 2021).

Although the foundation chairperson plays a strong role as a policy maker, policy implementation is carried out collaboratively with the madrasah principal and teaching staff. This pattern reflects participatory leadership principles, which emphasize the importance of involving organizational members in decision-making processes to enhance institutional ownership and commitment (Bush, 2011). Consequently, foundation leadership is not centralized but dialogical and inclusive, resulting in policies that are more legitimate and effective.

2. Implementation of Leadership Strategies in Madrasah Governance and Management

The implementation of the foundation chairperson's leadership strategies at MA Al-Ishlah is clearly manifested in the strengthening of madrasah governance and management. The foundation chairperson is actively involved in program planning, supervision of program implementation, and periodic evaluation of madrasah performance. This involvement reflects a balance between control and

empowerment, preventing excessive structural dominance over the madrasah principal.

These findings align with the principles of good school governance, which emphasize harmonious and functional relationships between strategic policy makers and technical education implementers (Bush, 2011). Effective madrasah governance is characterized by policy transparency, role clarity, and continuous coordination between the foundation and madrasah management. Intensive coordination between the foundation chairperson and the madrasah principal has contributed to improved institutional management effectiveness. Madrasah programs are designed based on actual needs and internal evaluations rather than merely fulfilling administrative requirements. This reflects the application of need-based management principles, in which contextual conditions serve as the primary basis for decision-making.

Furthermore, the foundation chairperson plays a crucial role in cultivating a disciplined, professional, and religious organizational culture. This culture is fostered through leadership exemplification, habituation of Islamic values, and reinforcement of institutional norms. According to organizational culture theory, leaders hold a central role in shaping and maintaining organizational culture as a system of values that influences members' behavior and performance (Schein, 2017). At MA Al-Ishlah, the integration of religious and professional culture serves as a vital foundation for improving madrasah quality.

3. The Role of the Foundation Chairperson in Enhancing Teacher Professionalism

The findings reveal that enhancing teacher professionalism constitutes a primary focus of the foundation chairperson's leadership strategy. The foundation chairperson recognizes teachers as key actors in determining the quality of both learning processes and outcomes. Accordingly, foundation policies are directed toward developing teachers' pedagogical, professional, and personal competencies.

This finding corresponds with instructional leadership theory, which asserts that effective educational leadership must prioritize improving instructional quality and teacher professional development (Hallinger, 2011). Although the foundation chairperson is not directly involved in classroom instruction, the strategic policies and support provided indirectly influence instructional quality. Foundation support is manifested through facilitating teacher training, encouraging participation in subject-teacher forums (*MGMP*), and promoting the pursuit of higher academic qualifications. These strategies reflect a human capital development approach, which views investment in human resource development as essential to sustaining educational quality (Sallis, 2014).

In addition to structural support, the foundation chairperson provides moral and psychological support to teachers. Trust-building, recognition of performance,

and open communication contribute to a positive working climate. From a transformational leadership perspective, these conditions enhance intrinsic motivation, loyalty, and institutional commitment among teachers (Northouse, 2021).

4. Development of Facilities and Infrastructure and Strengthening Institutional Image

With regard to facilities and infrastructure, the study finds that the foundation chairperson implements development initiatives gradually and systematically. Decision-making is based on priority scales and instructional needs, ensuring that despite financial limitations, infrastructure development proceeds in a sustainable manner. This strategy aligns with the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) in education, which emphasize continuous quality improvement while considering institutional capacity and available resources (Sallis, 2014). Facilities and infrastructure are understood not merely as physical assets but as essential supports for creating an effective learning environment.

Moreover, the foundation chairperson actively contributes to strengthening the madrasah's institutional image within the community. These efforts include improving educational service quality, reinforcing religious values, and engaging the madrasah in socio-religious activities. From a stakeholder theory perspective, community trust and satisfaction are critical indicators of educational institutional success and serve as social capital for madrasah sustainability.

5. Supporting and Constraining Factors in the Implementation of Leadership Strategies

This study identifies several key supporting factors in the implementation of the foundation chairperson's leadership strategies, including strong leadership commitment, shared vision between the foundation and madrasah management, and moral support from the community. These factors create an organizational environment conducive to improving madrasah quality. However, the study also identifies constraining factors, such as limited financial resources, suboptimal data-based evaluation systems, and disparities in teacher competencies. These challenges indicate that improving madrasah quality is a complex process requiring adaptive leadership. This finding is consistent with adaptive leadership theory, which emphasizes a leader's ability to respond to challenges, manage constraints, and promote continuous innovation (Northouse, 2021).

Overall, the findings confirm that the quality of the foundation chairperson's leadership has a significant influence on improving madrasah quality. Visionary, participatory, and value-based leadership grounded in Islamic principles has proven effective in strengthening governance, enhancing teacher professionalism, and building public trust in MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon Grobogan.

The findings affirm that the leadership of the Chairperson of the MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon Grobogan Foundation occupies a strategic position in determining the direction and quality of madrasah management. The foundation chairperson functions not merely as a holder of structural authority but as a key actor in cultivating an organizational culture conducive to educational quality improvement. The leadership approach demonstrates a balance between control and empowerment, enabling the madrasah to develop flexibly in response to contemporary challenges.

In policy formulation, the foundation chairperson exhibits a clear vision for madrasah development, translated into long-term strategic policies such as strengthening madrasah identity, improving graduate quality, and aligning educational programs with community needs. These policies are not imposed rigidly from the top but are communicated through dialogue and coordination with the madrasah principal, reflecting participatory leadership that fosters a strong sense of institutional ownership among administrators and teachers.

In terms of human resource development, the foundation chairperson's leadership strategy emphasizes continuous professional development. Teachers are viewed as the institution's primary asset, and madrasah quality improvement begins with enhancing teacher quality. Support for teacher professional development strengthens not only pedagogical competence but also commitment and loyalty to the madrasah, which directly impacts instructional quality and goal-oriented learning processes.

Furthermore, the foundation chairperson plays a vital role in strengthening madrasah governance by promoting accountability, transparency, and efficiency in institutional management. This is reflected in supervision of programs, financial management, and periodic evaluation of madrasah leadership and teacher performance. Improved governance enables madrasah quality improvement initiatives to be implemented in a more systematic and sustainable manner.

Regarding facilities and infrastructure, foundation leadership prioritizes fulfilling essential instructional needs while enhancing the educational environment. Adequate facilities contribute to a comfortable and effective learning atmosphere, benefiting both students and teachers. Consequently, foundation leadership indirectly contributes to improved student achievement and learning discipline. Beyond managerial aspects, the foundation chairperson's leadership is strongly value-driven. Islamic values such as trust (*amanah*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), and social responsibility form the foundation of decision-making. The integration of religious values with modern leadership practices enables the madrasah to excel not only administratively but also in institutional character, thereby strengthening public trust in MA Al-Ishlah as a high-quality and competitive Islamic educational institution.

In conclusion, this discussion demonstrates that improving madrasah quality cannot be separated from the quality of foundation leadership. Visionary, participatory, and value-based leadership has proven effective in simultaneously strengthening academic, managerial, and cultural dimensions of madrasah quality. These findings reinforce the view that foundations play a strategic role as primary drivers in achieving sustainable and high-quality madrasah development.

Table Summary of Research Findings and Discussion

No.	Aspect Studied	Key Findings	Impact on Madrasah Quality
1	Leadership Pattern of the Foundation Chairperson	Leadership is strategic, visionary, participatory, and grounded in Islamic values	Provides sustainable direction for madrasah development
2	Madrasah Governance and Management	Leadership implementation is carried out collaboratively between the foundation and the principal	Enhances managerial effectiveness and institutional accountability
3	Teacher Professionalism	The foundation chairperson supports the development of teachers' competence and motivation	Improves the quality of learning and the academic climate
4	Facilities and Institutional Image	Facilities are developed gradually and systematically, along with strengthening the institutional image	Creates a conducive learning environment and increases public trust
5	Supporting and Inhibiting Factors	Supported by strong commitment and shared vision, but constrained by limited resources	Requires adaptive and innovative leadership

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion regarding the leadership strategies of the foundation chairperson in improving madrasah quality at MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon Grobogan, it can be concluded that the quality of the madrasah is strongly influenced by the leadership patterns and strategies of the foundation chairperson as the holder of the institution's strategic policies. The foundation chairperson does not merely function as an administrative manager of the foundation, but also serves as a central actor who determines the overall direction of development, sustainability, and quality of the madrasah.

This study finds that the leadership pattern of the foundation chairperson at MA Al-Ishlah is strategic, visionary, participatory, and grounded in Islamic values. These leadership strategies are reflected in the chairperson's ability to formulate a clear, contextual, and long-term oriented vision and development policies for the madrasah. The vision is not confined to a normative level, but is translated into concrete policies and priority programs that address core aspects of education, such as improving the quality of learning, enhancing teacher professionalism, strengthening institutional governance, and reinforcing students' religious character.

The implementation of the foundation chairperson's leadership strategies is carried out through the strengthening of collaborative madrasah governance and management. Intensive coordination between the foundation and the head of the madrasah creates alignment between strategic policies and their technical implementation at the operational level. This dialogical and non-centralistic leadership approach fosters a conducive, accountable, and professional working climate, enabling quality improvement programs to be implemented more effectively and sustainably.

In terms of human resource development, the foundation chairperson plays a significant role in promoting educator professionalism through structural, moral, and psychological support. Support for teachers' competency development—through training programs, professional forums, and the enhancement of academic qualifications—has a positive impact on increasing educators' motivation, loyalty, and commitment to the madrasah. This, in turn, directly contributes to improvements in the quality of the learning process and the academic climate at MA Al-Ishlah.

Furthermore, the foundation chairperson's leadership strategies are also evident in the development of educational facilities and infrastructure, as well as in strengthening the institutional image of the madrasah. Facility development is carried out gradually and systematically, in accordance with the madrasah's capacity and priority needs. At the same time, efforts to build a positive institutional image through improved service quality and the reinforcement of religious values have succeeded in increasing public trust in MA Al-Ishlah as a high-quality Islamic educational institution.

This study also identifies supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the foundation chairperson's leadership strategies. The main supporting factors include strong leadership commitment, shared vision between the foundation and the madrasah, and community support. Meanwhile, the

inhibiting factors consist of limited financial resources, the lack of optimal data-based evaluation systems, and disparities in educator competencies. These findings indicate that improving madrasah quality is a continuous process that requires adaptive, innovative, and long-term oriented leadership. Overall, this study affirms that visionary, participatory, and Islamic value-based leadership strategies of the foundation chairperson make a significant contribution to improving the quality of the madrasah at MA Al-Ishlah Pulokulon Grobogan. Effective foundation leadership is capable of integrating academic, managerial, and cultural aspects simultaneously, enabling the madrasah not only to sustain its existence but also to enhance its competitiveness and public trust in a sustainable manner

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