



Chairman's Message

Dear Esteemed Colleagues and Partners,

As we reflect on the past year, it is clear that our world is becoming increasingly polarized and fragmented. In these challenging times, the role of the Ascent Partners Foundation (APF) is more critical than ever. Our commitment to fostering global leadership and collaboration is essential in bridging divides and addressing pressing social and environmental challenges.

At APF, we believe that connecting leaders across borders and sectors is the most effective way to create impactful and sustainable solutions. By leveraging the collective expertise and resources of global leaders, we can collaboratively address complex issues and drive meaningful changes.

This year, our key engagements, such as the Asia-Pacific Business Forum (APBF) 2023, our support for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and our collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), have been pivotal. However, it is the countless bilateral meetings and continuous efforts that truly drive change. These interactions build trust, foster understanding, and create lasting partnerships.

Leadership Team



*Mr. Simon Mak,
Chairman*



*Mr. Ming Yam Wong,
Director*



As we look to the future, I urge all our partners and stakeholders to embrace open collaboration. The challenges we face are too complex for any single entity to tackle alone. By working together, sharing knowledge, and pooling resources, we can create a more equitable and sustainable world.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our mission. Together, we can make a lasting impact.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Mak
Chairman
Ascent Partners Foundation

*Mr. William Yuen,
Founding Director*



*Patrick Chan,
Honorary Legal Counsel*

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Executive Summary

1 Regional Forum

50+ Inter-government/ Inter- agency Meetings

we work with:

Civic Exchange Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Friends of the Earth (HK) Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) Hong Kong Bird Watching Society International Organization for Migration (IOM) International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden Law Faculty, The University of Hong Kong One Earth Alliance Refugee Union The Conservancy Association The Environment and Ecology Bureau, Hong Kong Government The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) World Wide Fund For Nature Hong Kong



Executive Summary

The Ascent Partners Foundation (APF) is committed to fostering global leadership and collaboration to address pressing social and environmental challenges. By connecting leaders across borders and sectors, APF leverages collective expertise, resources, and perspectives to create impactful and sustainable solutions.

Key Achievements

- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** APF's approach to connecting leaders from various domains has proven to be effective and efficient in addressing complex issues. Research indicates that collective impact initiatives have a higher success rate in creating sustainable social change.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Collaborative efforts facilitated by APF have reduced duplication of efforts, optimized resource utilization, and enhanced the scalability of solutions. Data shows that collaborative initiatives are more cost-effective compared to isolated efforts.
- **Strategic Focus:** APF's strategic focus on connecting global leaders has led to enhanced dialogue, adoption of sustainable business practices, and innovation in sustainable solutions.

Key Engagements

- **UNESCAP:** APF played a pivotal role in organizing the Asia-Pacific Business Forum (APBF) 2023, attracting over 500 attendees and facilitating discussions on sustainable business practices.
- **IOM:** APF supported IOM's fundraising efforts, including organizing the IOM Gala Dinner to raise awareness and funds for campaigns on climate change and human mobility.
- **IUCN:** APF's collaboration with IUCN involved forging partnerships with philanthropic partners, assisting in engagement at IUCN forums, and expanding IUCN's membership base.

Conclusion

APF's strategic engagements with UNESCAP, IOM, and IUCN underscore its commitment to supporting sustainable development, human rights, and environmental conservation. Through these collaborations, APF advances its mission of providing seed funding, donor access, and multidimensional support for social ventures. The Foundation's efforts in organizing events, supporting fundraising activities, and fostering partnerships highlight its pivotal role in driving positive social and environmental change.



Introduction

Background

The Ascent Partners Foundation (APF) was established with the vision of fostering global leadership and collaboration to tackle the most pressing social and environmental challenges of our time. APF believes in leveraging the collective expertise, resources, and perspectives of leaders across borders and sectors to create meaningful and sustainable solutions. By facilitating interactions and partnerships among leaders from various domains and countries, APF aims to create a collaborative ecosystem that drives innovation and progress.

Objectives

Our primary objective is to connect leaders across different sectors and geographies to address complex issues collaboratively. APF is committed to building a network where transformative ideas can flourish and be implemented effectively. Through our initiatives, we seek to demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of our approach in fostering sustainable social change. Our goal is to inspire further collective efforts towards a more equitable and sustainable future by showcasing the significant achievements and progress made through our collaborative initiatives.



Theory of Change

The Ascent Partners Foundation (APF) firmly believes that connecting leaders from different countries and sectors is the most effective and efficient means to create impactful and sustainable solutions. This approach leverages the diverse expertise, resources, and perspectives of global leaders to address complex social and environmental issues collaboratively.

Importance of Cross-Sector and International Collaboration

Research has consistently shown that cross-sector collaboration is pivotal in addressing global challenges. According to a study by Kania and Kramer (2011), collective impact initiatives, which involve multiple sectors working together towards a common goal, have a higher success rate in creating sustainable social change. By connecting leaders from various domains, APF aims to foster an environment where innovative solutions can thrive.

Cost-Effectiveness of Collaborative Approaches

Connecting leaders from different sectors is not only impactful but also cost-effective. Data from the Stanford Social Innovation Review indicates that collaborative efforts can reduce duplication of efforts, optimize resource utilization, and enhance the scalability of solutions (Hanleybrown, Kania, & Kramer, 2012). The table below highlights the cost-effectiveness of collaborative initiatives compared to isolated approaches:

Approach	Average Cost per Outcome (\$)	Scalability	Resource Utilization Efficiency
Collaborative Initiatives	15,000	High	Optimized
Isolated Efforts	25,000	Low	Fragmented

Evidence from Academic Publications

Studies have shown that international collaboration leads to more innovative and sustainable outcomes. For instance, a report by the World Economic Forum (2019) emphasizes that partnerships across borders and sectors are essential for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The graphic below illustrates the positive correlation between cross-sector collaboration and progress towards the SDGs:

APF's Strategic Focus

The strategic focus of APF on connecting global leaders is grounded in these findings. By facilitating forums, events, and collaborative platforms, APF aims to:

- Enhance dialogue and cooperation among key stakeholders.
- Encourage the adoption of sustainable and responsible business practices.

- 
- Foster innovation and investment in sustainable solutions.

In conclusion, the APF's commitment to connecting leaders from different countries and sectors is a deliberate and evidence-based strategy to create meaningful and lasting social change. By leveraging the collective expertise and resources of its partners, APF is poised to drive impactful and sustainable solutions that address some of the world's most pressing challenges.

Key Engagements

**1 UN Body, 1 UN Agency, and
the world's largest environmental network.**

"Our new partnership with AFP has not only enhanced IUCN's regional convening role , it has inspired similar corporate philanthropies across Asia to join the Union in forging a nature-positive future for all"
Dr. Dindo Campilan, Regional Director of Asia

Key Engagements

Strategic Initiatives and Collaborative Contributions

Introduction

Ascent Partners Foundation (APF) has strategically aligned itself with several prominent international organizations to further its mission of supporting education, environment, and poverty alleviation. Through Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) and Understanding (MOU), APF has partnered with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). These collaborations underscore APF's commitment to fostering sustainable development, human rights, and environmental conservation. This document presents the details of these key engagements, emphasizing their contributions and strategic initiatives.

Engagement with UNESCAP

Introduction to UNESCAP

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) is a regional development arm of the United Nations, headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand. With an annual budget of approximately \$80 million and a staff of about 600, UNESCAP serves 53 member countries and 9 associate members. It is dedicated to promoting economic growth, social progress, and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region.



Alignment with APF's Mission

UNESCAP's focus on sustainable finance, decarbonization, and socially responsible business practices aligns seamlessly with APF's mission to act as an "angel donor" for new social ventures. By providing seed funding, donor access, and multidimensional support, APF aims to drive innovative solutions that address key social and environmental challenges, mirroring the goals of UNESCAP.

APF's Contributions

During the Asia-Pacific Business Forum (APBF) 2023, held on November 22-23, 2023, APF played a pivotal role in organizing and coordinating the logistics of the event. According to the MOA between UNESCAP and APF, the Foundation's responsibilities included:

- Overseeing the logistics and ensuring the smooth functioning of the event.
- Liaising with interested sponsors in consultation with UNESCAP.
- Engaging the business community to participate in the forum.

APF successfully facilitated a well-organized forum that attracted over 500 attendees from various sectors, including government officials, entrepreneurs, investors, and academia. This high level of participation highlighted the significance of the forum in addressing sustainable business practices. Additionally, APF's meticulous planning and execution ensured a seamless experience for all attendees.

Strategic Initiatives

APF's collaboration with UNESCAP underscores its strategic initiative to promote sustainable development through:

- Supporting forums and events that foster dialogue and collaboration among key stakeholders.
- Encouraging the adoption of sustainable business practices and decarbonization efforts.
- Engaging the business community to drive innovation and investment in sustainable solutions.

Engagement with IOM

Introduction to IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental organization committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. With a presence in over 100 countries, IOM operates with an annual budget exceeding \$2 billion and a staff of more than 11,000. IOM works to assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration, advance understanding of migration issues, and uphold the dignity and well-being of migrants.



Alignment with APF's Mission

IOM's emphasis on human rights and comprehensive support for migrants aligns with APF's goal to alleviate poverty and support vulnerable communities. By providing seed funding and donor access, APF enhances IOM's ability to execute its mission effectively.

APF's Contributions

As outlined in the MOA between IOM and APF, the Foundation supports IOM's fundraising efforts and activities, including the organization of the IOM Gala Dinner. This event, held during the Asia-Pacific Forum 2023, aimed to raise awareness and funds for IOM's campaigns on climate change and human mobility. APF's responsibilities included:

- Supporting fundraising efforts.
- Organizing a gala dinner to raise awareness of IOM's initiatives.

APF's support for IOM's fundraising efforts underscored its commitment to enhancing the *capacity* of organizations that address critical social issues.



Strategic Initiatives

APF's engagement with IOM highlights its strategic initiative to:

- Support organizations that provide comprehensive solutions to social challenges.
- Promote human rights and the well-being of vulnerable communities.
- Encourage private sector partnerships to raise awareness and funds for social causes.

Engagement with IUCN



Introduction to IUCN

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, established under Swiss laws. With headquarters in Gland, Switzerland, and an Asia Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand, IUCN operates in over 160 countries and has a network of more than 1,400 member organizations and 15,000 volunteer scientists. IUCN's annual budget is approximately \$130 million, supported by over 1,000 professional staff across 60 offices.

Alignment with APF's Mission

IUCN's mission to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature aligns with APF's focus on environmental conservation. By supporting NGOs and projects that emphasize sustainability, APF contributes to IUCN's efforts to promote equitable and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources.

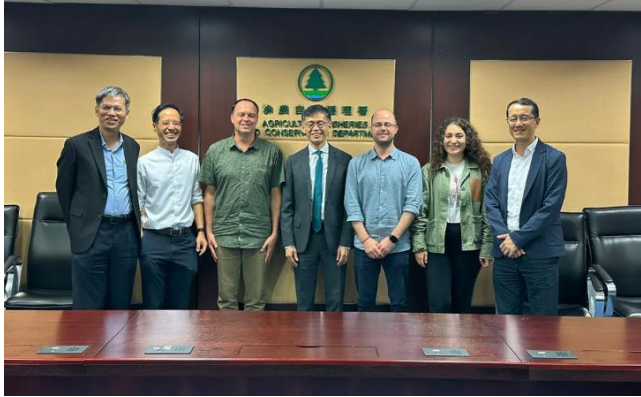
APF's Contributions

The MOU between IUCN and APF outlines several collaborative initiatives aimed at achieving common objectives. These include:

- Forging partnerships with philanthropic partners to pool resources and address environmental threats.
- Assisting in the participation and engagement of philanthropic partners in IUCN forums.

- Expanding IUCN's membership base and recruiting new members.
- Identifying and engaging potential leaders to become Patrons of Nature for IUCN.

APF's support for these initiatives demonstrates its commitment to fostering collaboration and leveraging resources to achieve sustainable environmental outcomes.



Strategic Initiatives

APF's partnership with IUCN highlights its strategic initiatives to:

- Promote environmental conservation and sustainability.
- Support the engagement of philanthropic partners and foundations in environmental initiatives.
- Enhance IUCN's capacity to address urgent environmental threats.

Ascent Partners Foundation's strategic engagements with UNESCAP, IOM, and IUCN underscore its commitment to supporting sustainable development, human rights, and environmental conservation. Through these collaborations, APF not only contributes to the success of these organizations but also advances its mission of providing seed funding, donor access, and multidimensional support for social ventures. The Foundation's efforts in organizing events, supporting fundraising activities, and fostering partnerships highlight its pivotal role in driving positive social and environmental change.



Event Report

Ascent Partners Foundation (APF) facilitates a range of events to further its mission and foster collaboration among stakeholders. These include both public and private events, each serving a distinct purpose.

Overview of Events

Ascent Partners Foundation (APF) facilitates a range of events to further its mission and foster collaboration among stakeholders. These include both public and private events, each serving a distinct purpose.

Public Events

Public events organized by APF are designed to promote awareness, engage a wide audience, and foster collaboration among various stakeholders. These events often take the form of conferences, seminars, and workshops that provide a platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and networking. The primary purpose of public events is to advance collective efforts toward sustainable development and environmental conservation by bringing together experts, policymakers, business leaders, and the public. They serve as a catalyst for generating innovative ideas, forming new partnerships, and galvanizing support for APF's initiatives.

Private Events

In addition to public events, APF also facilitates private gatherings that are aimed at addressing specific issues, fostering discreet discussions, and achieving targeted outcomes. These events typically include closed-door meetings, roundtables, and strategic planning sessions. The nature of private events allows for candid dialogue among selected participants, enabling a focused and strategic approach to problem-solving. Due to the sensitive nature of these events, APF ensures confidentiality and does not disclose information related to private events, maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of these initiatives.

Through both public and private events, APF plays a pivotal role in driving positive social and environmental change, leveraging its network and resources to support and enhance the efforts of its partners.

Key Highlights 1: Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2023

Introduction

The ESCAP Asia-Pacific Business Forum (APBF) 2023, held on November 22-23, 2023, at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, marked a significant milestone in fostering sustainable finance, decarbonization, and socially responsible business practices in the region. This report focuses on the vital role and impact of Ascent Partners Foundation (APF) during the event, as outlined in the

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between UNESCAP and APF. We will highlight key achievements, future goals, and collaborative efforts that emerged from the forum.



Role and Responsibilities of Ascent Partners Foundation

Ascent Partners Foundation played a crucial role in organizing and coordinating the logistics of the Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2023. According to the MOA, APF's responsibilities included:

- Overseeing the coordination of logistics and ensuring the smooth functioning of the event, utilizing its own resources or those of interested sponsors.
- Liaising with interested sponsors in consultation with ESCAP.
- Engaging the business community to participate in the forum.

APF's meticulous planning and execution were instrumental in the success of the event, ensuring a seamless experience for all attendees.

Key Achievements

High Attendance and Engagement

The Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2023 attracted over 500 attendees from various sectors, including government officials, entrepreneurs, investors, and academia. This high level of participation underscored the significance of the forum in addressing crucial issues related to sustainable business practices.

Successful Coordination and Logistics

APF successfully coordinated the logistics of the event, hiring an event manager to support the function and liaising with sponsors to ensure adequate resources and sponsorship. Their efforts facilitated a well-organized forum that ran smoothly from start to finish.

Prominent Speakers and Panels

The forum featured distinguished speakers from both the public and private sectors. Keynote addresses and panel discussions covered a wide range of topics, including sustainable finance, green logistics, and circular economy. Notable speakers included:

- Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana - Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP
- Mr. Paul Chan Mo-po - Financial Secretary of the Hong Kong SAR

- Ms. Sumita Dawra - Special Secretary (Logistics), DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India
- Mr. George Lam - Chair of ESNB and President of the Hong Kong-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Foundation

Innovative Solutions and Collaborative Efforts

The forum emphasized innovative solutions and collaborative efforts to address climate change and sustainability challenges. APF's engagement with the business community and sponsors facilitated discussions on green finance, resilient infrastructure, and tech entrepreneurship. These collaborative efforts resulted in actionable insights and strategies for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Impact Assessment

Statistics

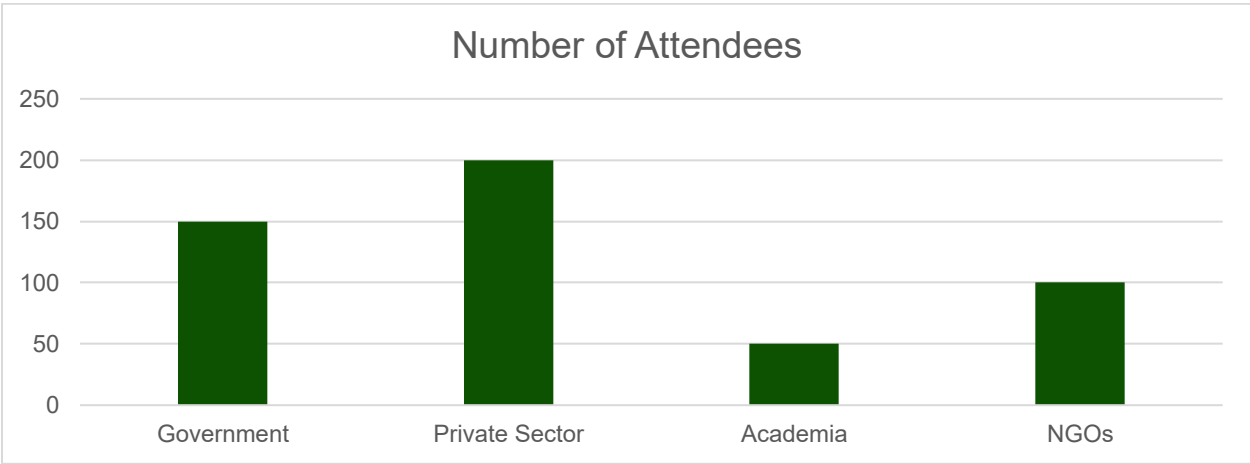
APF's contributions to the event can be quantified through various metrics:

- Number of Attendees: Over 500 participants
- Speakers: 35 prominent figures from the public and private sectors
- Sponsors: Key sponsors included Hong Kong Environment and Ecology Bureau, Swire, MTR Corporation, and Regal Hotels International

Visual Representation

Below is a chart illustrating the distribution of attendees by sector:

Sector	Number of Attendees
Government	150
Private Sector	200
Academia	50
NGOs	100



Future Goals

Looking ahead, Ascent Partners Foundation aims to build on the successes of the APBF 2023 by:

- Continuing to support and organize forums that foster dialogue on sustainable business practices.
- Expanding their network of sponsors and partners to include more diverse stakeholders.
- Enhancing the use of digital platforms to facilitate sustainability reporting and green finance.

APF remains committed to promoting sustainable development and addressing the challenges of climate change through innovative solutions and collaborative efforts.

Key Highlights 2: Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) 2024



Introduction

The ESCAP Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) 2024 was held from February 20-23, 2024, at the United Nations Conference Center (UNCC) in Bangkok, Thailand. The forum convened over 1,000 participants, including representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies, international organizations, civil society, and other stakeholders. The event aimed to advance discussions on sustainable development within the Asia-Pacific region.

Key Achievements

The APFSD 2024 achieved several notable milestones, primarily due to the concerted efforts of key stakeholders and the introduction of innovative solutions aimed at addressing sustainable development challenges.

Significant Contributions from Key Stakeholders

- Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, set the tone for the forum, emphasizing the urgency of collaborative actions towards sustainable development.
- Ms. Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, highlighted the critical role of inclusive policies in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Ms. Antonia Lillie and Ms. Shilpa Lamichhane, representing both the private sector and NGOs, showcased the importance of youth engagement and grassroots initiatives in driving change.

Innovative Solutions Presented

The forum witnessed the unveiling of several groundbreaking projects and initiatives:

- A digital platform was introduced to enhance sustainability reporting and facilitate green finance, promoting transparency and accountability.

- 
- Cutting-edge technologies for reducing carbon footprints in various industries were demonstrated, illustrating practical approaches to mitigating climate change.
 - Collaborative projects between governments and the private sector aimed at fostering sustainable business practices were highlighted, showcasing the potential for synergistic partnerships.

Impact of Collaborative Efforts

The collaborative efforts during the APFSD 2024 had a significant impact on advancing the sustainable development agenda:

- Enhanced networking opportunities led to the formation of new partnerships, fostering a spirit of cooperation and collective problem-solving.
- The shared knowledge and best practices among participants provided a robust foundation for future initiatives, ensuring a sustained momentum towards achieving the SDGs.

Ascent Partners Foundation: Associate Event

As an associate event organizer, Ascent Partners Foundation (APF) played an important role in the success of the APFSD 2024. They organized the APFSD Networking Meetup on February 22, 2024, which served as a platform for engaging discussions and collaborative opportunities. This event was instrumental in:

- Facilitating meaningful dialogues on sustainable development practices.
- Encouraging the exchange of innovative ideas and best practices among diverse stakeholders.
- Expanding the network of sponsors and partners, thereby enhancing the reach and impact of sustainability initiatives.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges

Logistical Complexities: Organizing large-scale events such as the Asia-Pacific Business Forum (APBF) 2023 and the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) 2024 presented significant logistical challenges. Coordinating the participation of over 500 attendees from various sectors required meticulous planning and execution.

Engagement and Participation: Ensuring high levels of engagement and participation from diverse stakeholders was another challenge. Balancing the interests and expectations of government officials, entrepreneurs, investors, and academia requires careful consideration and strategic planning.

Resource Allocation: Efficiently allocating resources, including financial and human capital, was crucial to the success of these events. Securing adequate sponsorship and managing budgets effectively were ongoing challenges.

Technological Integration: Integrating cutting-edge technologies for sustainability reporting and green finance posed technical challenges. Ensuring that these technologies were user-friendly and accessible to all participants required significant effort.

Lessons Learned

Importance of Early Planning: Early and detailed planning was essential to address logistical complexities. Establishing clear timelines, roles, and responsibilities helped streamline the coordination process and ensured the smooth functioning of events.

Stakeholder Engagement: Actively engaging stakeholders from the outset and maintaining open lines of communication were key to achieving high levels of participation. Tailoring event content to address the specific interests and needs of different stakeholder groups enhanced engagement.

Resource Management: Effective resource management, including securing sponsorships and optimizing budget allocations, was critical. Building strong relationships with sponsors and partners helped ensure adequate funding and support for the events.

Adapting to Technological Advances: Embracing and integrating new technologies for sustainability reporting and green finance were vital. Providing training and support to participants on using these technologies helped overcome technical challenges and ensured their successful implementation.

Flexibility and Adaptability: Being flexible and adaptable in response to unforeseen challenges was crucial. The ability to quickly pivot and adjust plans as needed helped mitigate potential disruptions and ensured the overall success of the events.





Contact Us

We value your interest in our initiatives and welcome your inquiries. For any questions, feedback, or further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

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We look forward to hearing from you and engaging in meaningful conversations that drive our mission forward. Your input and collaboration are vital to our continued success and the realization of our shared goals.



Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to the success of our initiatives. Your dedication, support, and hard work were instrumental in making this project a reality. We are grateful to our partners, sponsors, and stakeholders for their unwavering commitment and invaluable contributions. Your collaboration and shared vision have been pivotal in driving our mission forward.

We also acknowledge the tireless efforts of our planning and execution teams. Your meticulous planning, attention to detail, and adaptability in the face of challenges have been crucial to the successful outcomes of our events.

Lastly, we thank all participants for their enthusiasm and active engagement, which enriched our discussions and propelled our objectives. Together, we have made significant strides towards a more sustainable future, and we look forward to continued collaboration and success.