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Responsibility and Accountability in Institutional Governance

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Aims



- To outline an analytical framework to understand the relationship between responsibility and accountability as facets of governance in education



- This includes analysis of national education policy according to its normative and standardising role, but also institutional responses and reflexive decision-making in school practice
- To explore how the principals' conceptualise and respond to new expectations of current evaluation policy and emerging accountabilities



Research design

- Mixed approach: combining survey data with group interviews from 11 case studies
- Comparative design
- The survey: 540 principals, response rate of 67 percent, national representative study
- The cases are selected strategically according to background variables (e.g. geographical location, school size, school types), compulsory education (1st – 10th grade)

Focus



- Conceptions of reform implementation and change (curriculum, organisation and evaluation)
- Perceptions of evaluation tools
- Perceptions of accountability according to new expectations
- Institutional response and responsiveness

Introduction of a national evaluation system



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“The national system of evaluation represents a system change which indicates that governing and control is replaced by trust and confidence that the teacher, the principal and the municipality, defined as the “school owner”, will know how to initiate good learning processes within the frames of the national curriculum.”

(White Paper No 30, *Culture for Learning* 2003-2004, The author’s translation)

Evaluation tools



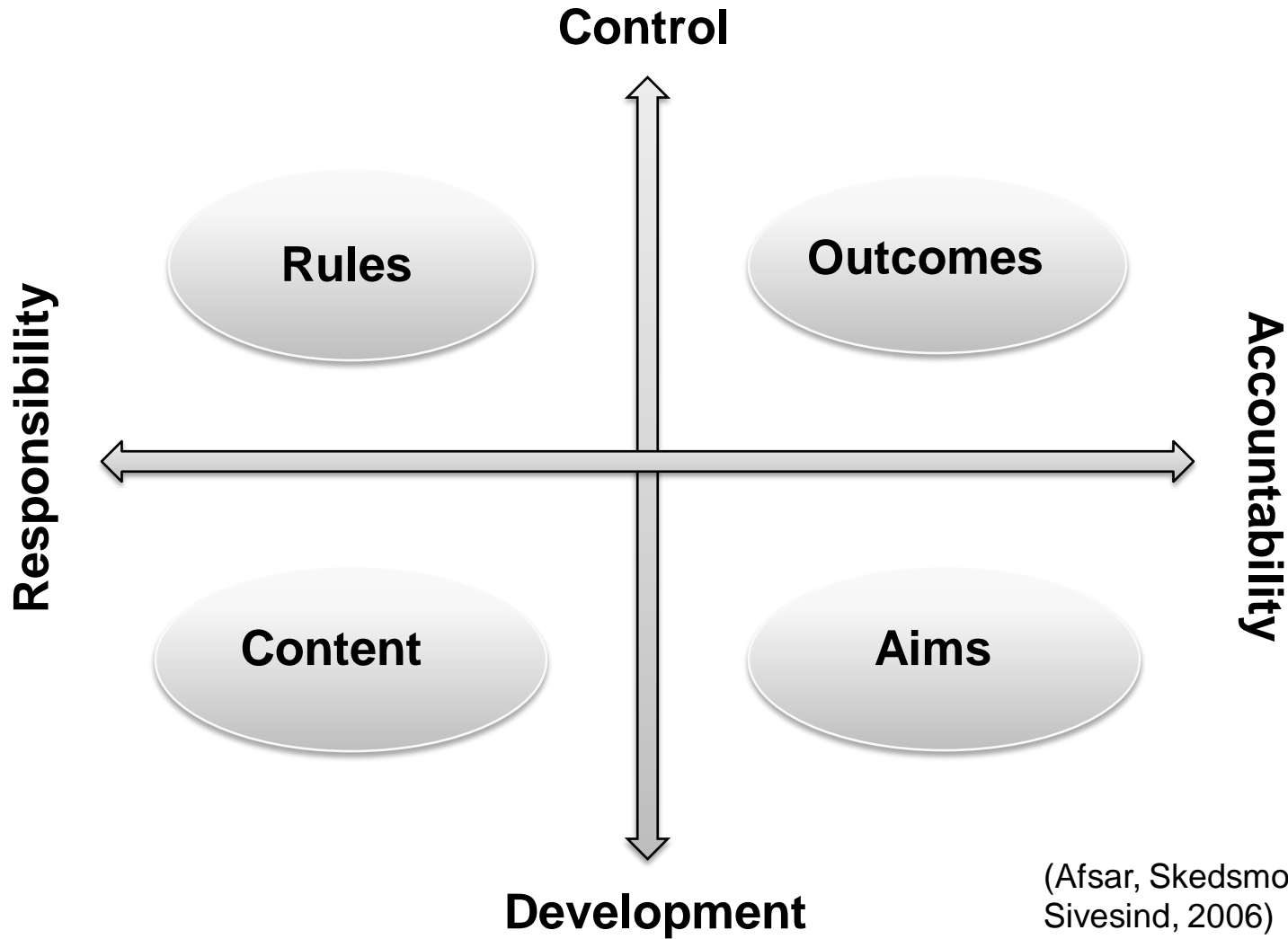
Tools	Purposes
Screening tests	To reveal the needs for support and adapted teaching related to the individual student as well as the schools
Local tests (summative and formative assessment)	To reveal the level of student achievement with respect to central subject areas as a basis to help the individual student to improve
Information material	Material provided by the National Directorate for Education and Training to help teachers, school leaders and municipalities using the system for learning and development purposes
National tests	<p>To investigate the extent to which students' achievements are coherent with the aims of competencies in the national curriculum</p> <p>To inform students, teachers, parents, school leaders, municipalities, regional authorities and national authorities about the level of achievement as a foundation for improving and development</p>
The School-leaving Examination and the Craft Certificate	Summative evaluation intended to inform the society, employers and education institutions about the achieved level of competency
International comparative achievement studies	<p>To evaluate and compare the level of achievement of Norwegian students to the level of achievement of students in other countries.</p> <p>To form the basis for policy formulation and to develop national quality indicators</p>

(Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2005, The author's translation)

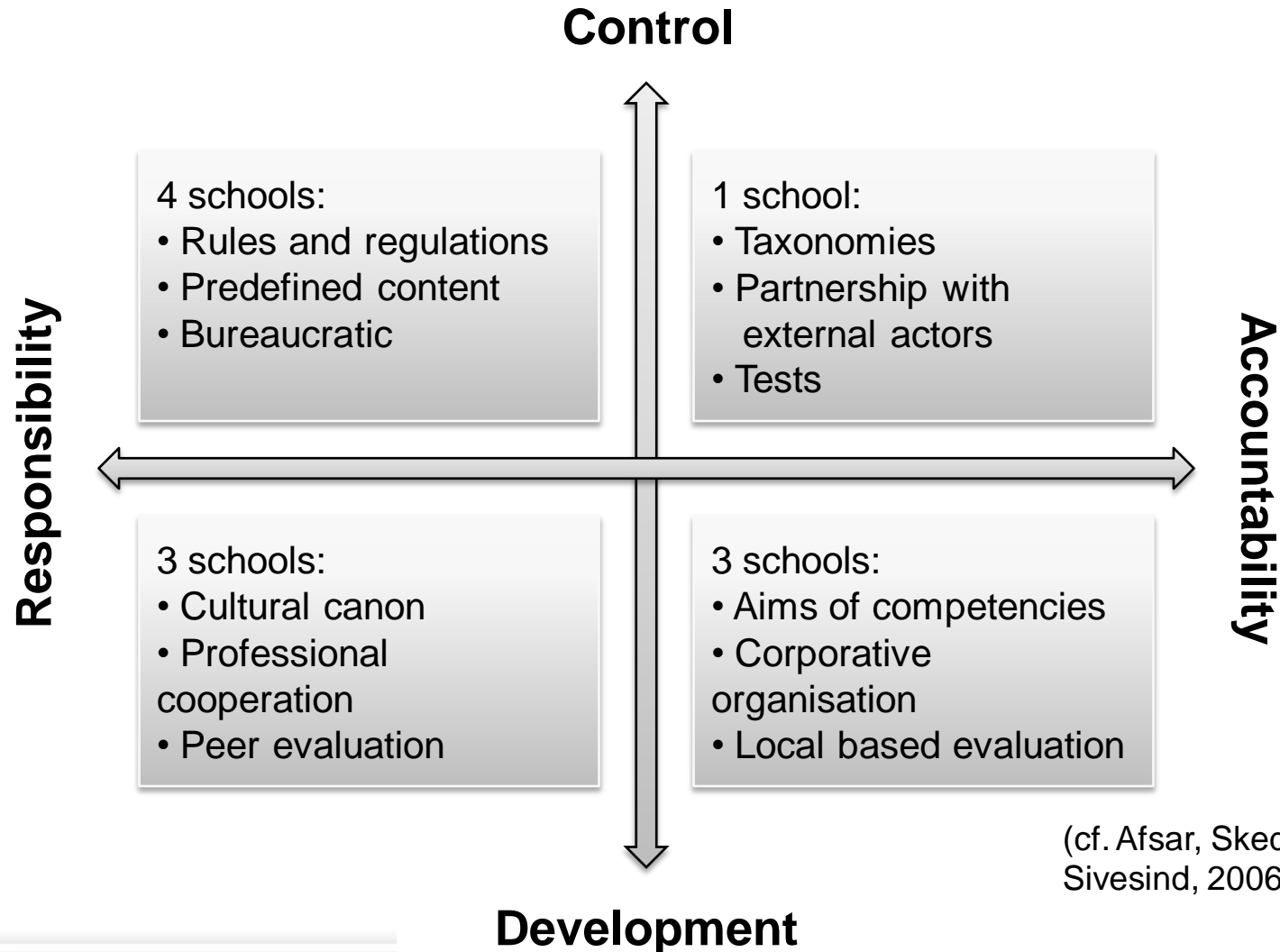
Analytical framework



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Conceptions of reform implementation and change

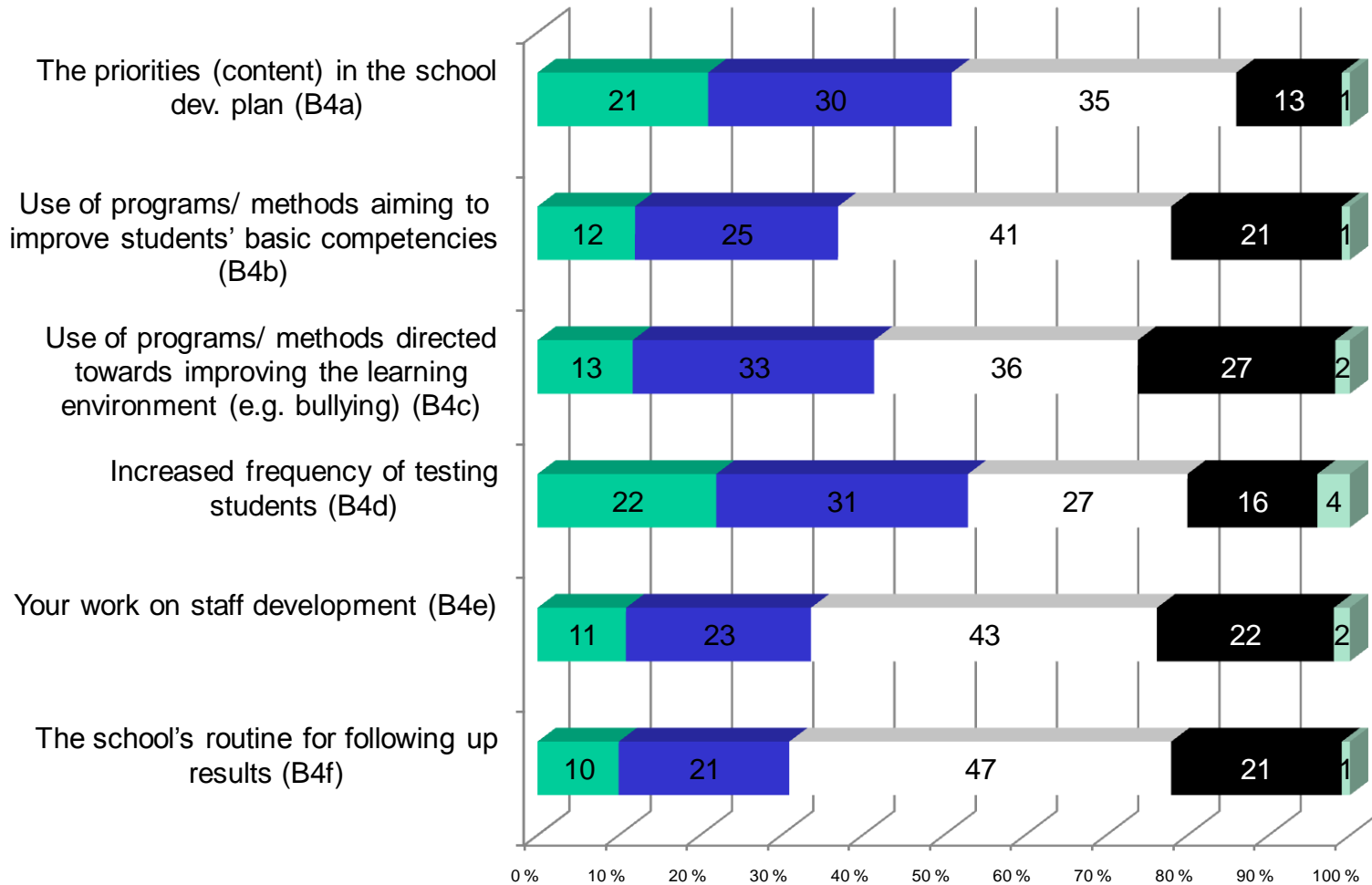


(cf. Afsar, Skedsmo & Sivesind, 2006)

Principals' conceptions of reform implementation and change



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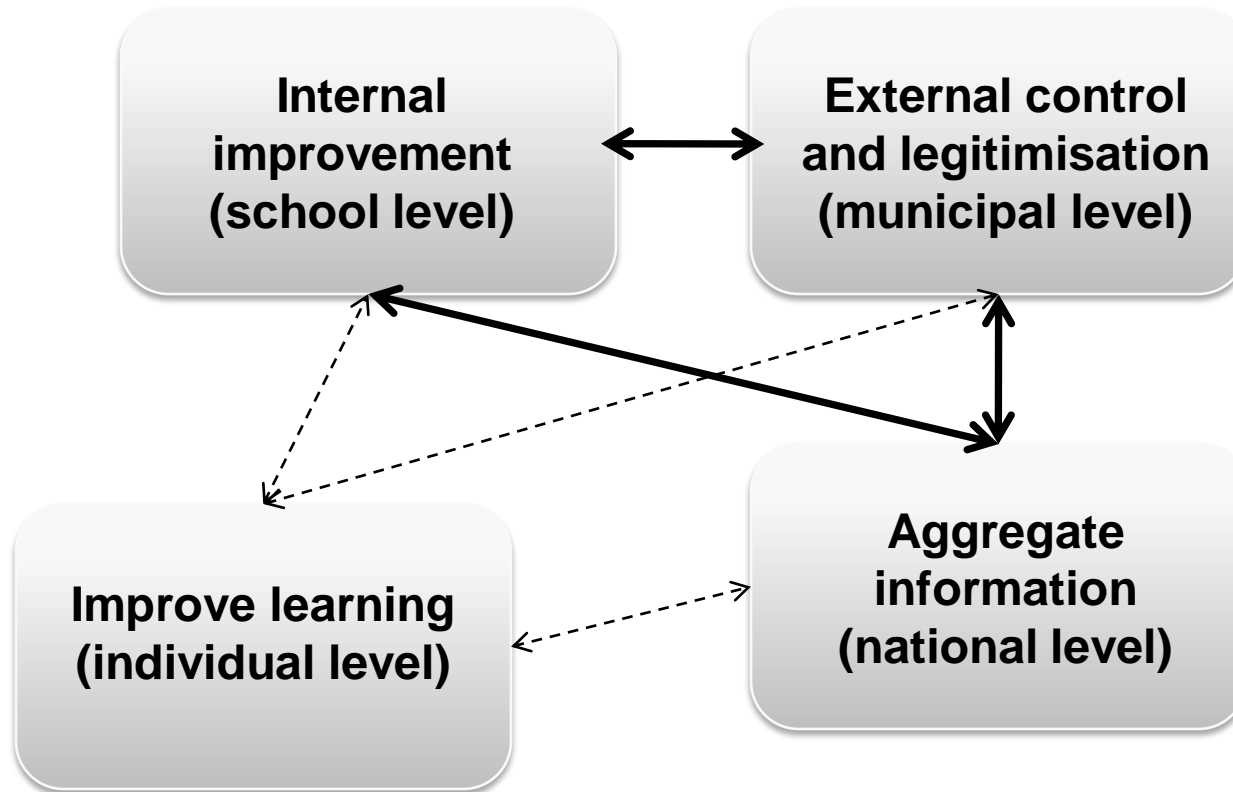


■ To a very low degree
 ■ To a low degree
 ■ To some degree
 ■ To a high degree
 ■ To a very high degree

Principals' perceptions of evaluation tools



Evaluation as an administrative system

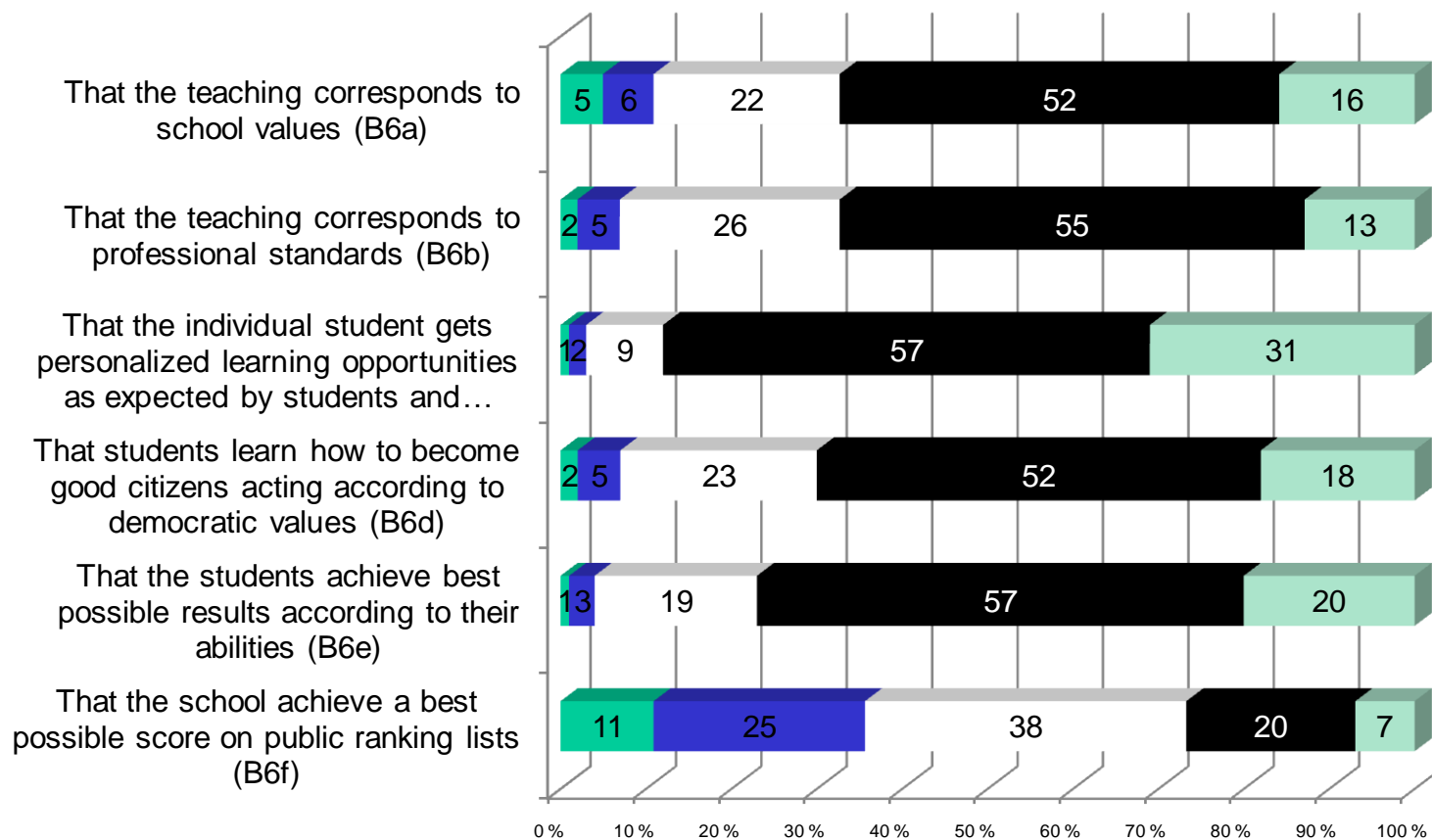


(Skedsmo, Forthcoming 2009)

Principals' perceptions of accountability



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■ To a very low degree
 ■ To a low degree
 To some degree
 ■ To a high degree
 ■ To a very high degree

Conclusions



- Governance opens up for variations of new forms of organisation and choice of focus / direction
- Evidence based policy can be seen as an attempt to regulate this variation
- The use of new tools introduced as part of the national evaluation system can be seen as an administrative system
- So far, the evaluation system implies “soft regulation” in terms of increased awareness of aims related to the level student achievements
- Internal accountability or accountability as moral obligations which is linked to the area of responsibility



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Thank you for the attention