

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 29 June 2021 09:30 GMT +05:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	UZBEKISTAN NATIONAL DIALOGUE TOWARDS THE UN 2021 FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT
CONVENED BY	Mr. Alisher Shukurov, Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture of Uzbekistan
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/29595/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Uzbekistan

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0	0-18	10	19-30	24	31-50	12	51-65	1	66-80	0	80+
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PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

36	Male	11	Female		Prefer not to say or Other
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

7	Agriculture/crops	4	Education	1	Health care
3	Fish and aquaculture	2	Communication	0	Nutrition
4	Livestock	1	Food processing	9	National or local government
	Agro-forestry	2	Food retail, markets	0	Utilities
2	Environment and ecology		Food industry	1	Industrial
2	Trade and commerce	2	Financial Services		Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
2	Large national business		Member of Parliament
1	Multi-national corporation		Local authority
1	Small-scale farmer	22	Government and national institution
2	Medium-scale farmer	1	Regional economic community
	Large-scale farmer	7	United Nations
2	Local Non-Governmental Organization	4	International financial institution
1	International Non-Governmental Organization		Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
	Indigenous People		Consumer group
2	Science and academia		Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

The UNCT in Uzbekistan, led by UNDP and FAO, joined forces with Uzbekistan's Ministry of Agriculture for the fourth national dialogue, taking collective action to transform the way Uzbekistan produces, consumes and thinks about food. Through this Dialogue, the UN draws attention to food systems sustainability and addresses the global triple crisis of climate, nature and pollution through an agricultural lens. The first and concluding National Dialogue of Uzbekistan's Food Systems Summit, was held on Tuesday 29 June, 2021, in Tashkent. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Dialogue was conducted partly online. It began with opening remarks from high-level speakers (Deputy Minister of Agriculture, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative, Assistant FAO Representative in Uzbekistan), and the Convenor of the National Dialogues, Mr Alisher Shukurov (Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture), presented outcomes of the two sub-national food systems dialogues, conducted in Nukus and Namangan. In the final Dialogue, international donor organizations in Uzbekistan, including the European Union, Japan International Cooperation Agency, the United States Agency for International Development, and the Islamic Development Bank, reconfirmed their commitment to support agriculture and food industries in Uzbekistan. In the discussion session, participants discussed the 5 Action Tracks; 1) Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all; 2) Shift to sustainable consumption patterns; 3) Boost nature-positive production; 4) Advance equitable livelihoods; 5) Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress. They reviewed the evidence on key challenges to strengthening food systems as highlighted in the previous dialogues and explored options for collective action that can contribute via national pathways towards sustainable food systems. The concluding Dialogue successfully created an opportunity for engagement and interconnection among an even broader set of food systems stakeholders, connecting the (sub)-national level, and consolidated country-level commitments.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

- **Act with urgency:** The final Member State Dialogue reinforced that transforming our food systems is among the most urgent and powerful ways of changing course and making progress towards all 17 SDGs. Rebuilding national food systems will also enable us to "build back better" from COVID-19. As we are all part of the food system, the Dialogue brought all stakeholders together to bring about the most needed transformation.
- **Recognize complexity:** The Dialogue also highlighted the consumption and production pressure we are putting on our planet, particularly on biodiversity, which in turn impacts on the regulation of climate, contributing to a global triple crisis. Consequently, it is vital to ensure that as we address the challenges associated with food systems sustainability, we also look at the bigger picture of addressing biodiversity decline and resource use. The national dialogues on food systems sustainability highlighted the global triple crisis, better informing and sharpening our engagement with national food systems.
- **Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity:** In total, 47 participants from diverse sectors, including agriculture, crops, fish, livestock, and the food industry, committed to this fourth Dialogue. The moderator and speakers also represented different stakeholder groups.
- **Complement the work of others:** The Dialogue offered opportunities to engage various stakeholders, such as the Government, the UN, NGOs and academic institutions, in considering their role in food systems, how their roles link with others, and how they can unite around transformative actions in support of the SDGs.
- **Build trust:** The Dialogue promoted trust and increased motivation to participate by being evidence-based, transparent and accessible in governance, decision-making, planning, engagement, and implementation. At the end of the Dialogue, it was agreed that all relevant stakeholders will keep working together to boost joint efforts aimed at providing food security and sustainable development through various forms of partnerships.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

In order to achieve sustainable solutions to the pressing and sometimes contradictory questions raised about food security systems, it is critical to appreciate the Principles of Engagement:

- **Rising population growth,** set against the global triple crisis of climate, nature and pollution, presents a powerful incentive to respond: urgent action is needed.
- **Building trust** allows for open Dialogue, and honest sharing of problems and solutions, as well as ensuring motivation and momentum to drive progress in the short and long term.
- **Due to the interconnectivity of aspects of food security across sectors,** it is important to include participation from a range of stakeholders. This prevents unforeseen outcomes, ensures sustainability, and heightens the involvement (and therefore motivation) of those affected by the outcomes. It can also contribute to the recognition of the voices of traditionally underrepresented sectors/groups of the population, who may have important and previously underappreciated input.
- **Food security represents a 'wicked problem'** in which interlinked or opposing elements must be considered: developing sustainable solutions depends on recognizing complexity.
- **Complementing the work of others** allows for efficiency, maximization of resources and accelerates progress towards achieving joint goals.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

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Yes

☐

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The Dialogue began with a brief overview of the two sub-national dialogues conducted in Nukus and Namangan. Based on the 5 Action Tracks – 1) Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all; 2) Shift to sustainable consumption patterns; 3) Boost nature-positive production; 4) Advance equitable livelihoods; 5) Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress – the issues identified and suggestions proposed were presented to all participants to consolidate country-level commitments and actions and shape the pathway to a sustainable national food system for the coming decade.

In the next session, the international donor organizations in Uzbekistan, including the European Union (EU), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), presented their diverse roles and activities within sustainable food systems and reconfirmed their commitment to supporting agriculture and food industries in Uzbekistan. The EU emphasised the importance of strengthening partnerships to take on ambitious goals and targets, focusing on the newly adopted Strategy of modernization of the food sector 2020-2030. The EU also highlighted the necessity for Uzbekistan to develop a quality supply chain to be more competitive in the export market. As agriculture is an essential part of Uzbekistan's economy, the EU introduced a Generalized Scheme of Preference Plus (GSP+) in April 2021, a special incentive for sustainable development and good governance. JICA underlined four major projects in the agricultural sector, focusing on developing innovative climate resilient technologies for monitoring/controlling water use efficiency for crop productivity in the Aral Sea Region. To target more small-scale farmers, JICA also prepared new procedures by utilizing counterpart funds, such as IFAD's loan schemes for small households and the National Farmers' Councils Fund. USAID explained the forthcoming five-year agribusiness development project, which will run from June 2025. USAID will introduce innovative business management practices and co-finance investments in new technologies to support farmers and agribusinesses to produce and add value to safe, quality, and environmentally sound agricultural products. USAID also offered the opportunity of a first agribusiness development fund. It allocated 2 million USD to support Uzbek agribusiness by co-financing and investing in new technologies. IsDB delivered a radical transformation of their business model; "from the bank of development to bank of the developer," to achieve sustainable food systems and catalyze investment in the agriculture sector. IsDB also provided an overview of the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Policy and explained that to mainstream the strategy into IsDB operation related to the agricultural system and agriculture sector it will seek strong connections with member countries in various sectors. In the thematic discussion session, the floor was open to all participants, and a diverse array of stakeholders, including those involved in food hygiene, academic research, and law contributed the Dialogue and explored options for collective action. Joint work on the formulation of proposals and recommendations was conducted, taking into account the results of all stages, for further submission to the organizing committee to the Summit.

In the concluding remarks, the Government of Uzbekistan highlighted that the multi-stakeholder Dialogue process would continue in the country even after the culmination of the global Food Systems Summit in September. Cognizant of existing strong food system cooperation internally and externally, the Government also underlined Uzbekistan's continuous commitment to demonstrating leadership in the forthcoming global dialogue session. The outcomes of the dialogues will contribute to the national food systems transformation pathway in the coming months and years.

ACTION TRACKS

✓	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
✓	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
✓	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
✓	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
✓	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

✓	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
✓	Human rights	✓	Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment	✓	Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

Role of International Development Organizations in Sustainability of the Food Systems in Uzbekistan

European Union (EU)

- The EU emphasised the importance of strengthening partnerships to take on ambitious goals and targets, focusing on the newly adopted Strategy of modernization of the food sector 2020-2030, the foundation of their cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture.
- As of March 2020, Uzbekistan liberalised the cotton market; the EU strongly supported this decision as a significant step toward ending child and forced labour in the country's cotton harvest.
- The EU also highlighted the necessity for Uzbekistan to develop a quality supply chain to be more competitive in the export market. As agriculture is an essential part of Uzbekistan's economy, the EU started a Generalized Scheme of Preference Plus (GSP+) in April 2021. It slashes tariffs to 0% for vulnerable low and lower-middle-income countries that implement 27 international conventions related to human rights, labour rights, protection of the environment and good governance.
- Last year, the EU developed two essential strategies on food security and nutrition and introducing an information and statistic systems into the agri-food sector.
- In cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Education, the EU also focuses on skills development in the agricultural sector by introducing new technology and an agricultural knowledge information system.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

- JICA presented four major projects within the agricultural sector:

1) technical cooperation through the international joint research project: "Development of Innovative Climate resilient technologies for Monitoring Controlling of Water Use Efficiency and Impact of Salinization on Crop Productivity and Livelihood in Aral Sea Region" to establish a sustainable & internal-circular agriculture business model and improve resilience in small scale farmers.

2) grass-roots technical cooperation: "Improvement of Apple Cultivation Technology and Dissemination to the Farmers," which provided several workshops and training courses on Pilot orchards, apple trees, speed sprayers, refrigerators and other equipment.

3) grant aid: "the project for improvement of Locust Management (Phase 2)," which involves regional cooperation between the six Central Asian countries.

4) a loan programme: "Horticulture Value Chain Promotion Project" including credit Loans (a two-step loan to end-users, horticulture farmers and agriculture companies for processing, storage and logistics), and consulting services (capacity building for PFIs and technical assistance for end-users).

- In order to target more small-scale farmers, JICA is preparing to introduce new procedures by utilising counterpart funds, such as IFAD's loan schemes for small households and the National Farmers' Councils Fund.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

- The new USAID five-year project; agribusiness development activity will run from June 2025.

• It will introduce innovative business practices and co-finance investment for new technology to support farmers and agribusiness to produce and add value through safe, quality, and environmentally sound agricultural products, promoting access to new markets, and increasing sales and employment.

• It also focuses on building skills among women and youth to launch their agribusiness and secure technical and management level jobs for them. USAID is partnering with the Uzbek agricultural University and institute to introduce a new practical curriculum and with the Ministry of Agriculture and private sector agricultural extension service providers to build skills and capacity that directly address farmers' needs.

• Last week, USAID launched the first agribusiness development fund. It allocated 2 million USD to support Uzbek agribusiness by co-financing and investing in new technologies. Uzbek enterprise and/or non-governmental organization are eligible, and applicants must be covered by a minimum of 50% of the total cost of the project. Details are available here.

Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

• Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Policy is a 10-Year Strategy developed by IsDB. It is a guiding tool for IsDB investment in its Member Countries and it applies to all IsDB-financed projects. The policy provides a platform for synergies to promote sustainable, resilient, and equitable agriculture and rural development through the development of viable and profitable agriculture value chains and by promoting innovative Islamic finance. It has the following three objectives: 1) alleviate poverty and enhance food security; 2) enhance public-private partnerships towards the overall aim of sustainable, inclusive and equitable agriculture and rural development; and 3) create rural employment opportunities both in agriculture and the rural non-farming economy.

• Under this policy, IsDB is undertaking a radical transformation of its business model to achieve sustainable food systems and catalyze investment in the agriculture sector.

• IsDB is shifting to promote inclusive private sector participation, access to market and finance instruments and building human institutional capacity.

• IsDB recognises that growth is essential for poverty reduction, and science, technology, and innovation are key to transforming Uzbekistan's agricultural food security system.

• Uzbekistan can contribute to agricultural transformation and serve as a model for other countries, such as the horticulture value chain development project in the Aral Sea Region.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

✓	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
✓	Human rights	✓	Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment	✓	Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/5

Action track #1 ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all

- It is essential to provide healthy and nutritious food for all populations. Recognising the high malnutrition level in Uzbekistan, more effort is required to improve education on health and nutrition by providing capacity building. It is also necessary to diversify agricultural products from the past monoculture approach that relies on the mass production of cotton and to produce organic foods by improving harvesting, logistics, and the marketing of agriculture. In this context, the recent expansion of horticulture, and the development of greenhouses is noteworthy. In order to provide the population with nutritious foods and a robust value chain, we need support from international donors and IFIs and should pay close attention to different areas of development.
- Developing behaviors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle is vital. The current culture of consumption and irrational food product usage should change, starting from primary education up to higher levels. We have to work with the population to strengthen awareness-raising. For instance, our festive customs usually involve inviting many guests for meals, but efforts will need to be made to provide healthier and more nutritious meals instead of the current oil- and meat-heavy diet. We also have to work with food producers to improve the quality of products which are served in cafeterias and restaurants.
- Proper food waste management needs should be improved through logistics, including access to transportation agencies. Current efforts should be scaled up. Waste products from households should be properly collected as solid waste, and the introduction of proper waste sorting is an urgent task. Establishment and capacity building of a specialised agency to properly sort and dispose of waste is required.
- We also need to rethink the way we advertise unhealthy products such as energy drinks and junk food. For instance, the U.S. Service for Agriculture Development provides health food certification from a specialised lab.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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		✓	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/5

Action track #2 shift to sustainable consumption patterns

- It is critical to transform farms to produce green and ecological products without using excessive pesticides to meet international standards and increase competitiveness in the market. Food processing enterprises, farmers and retailers, including different food producers, restaurants, and cafeterias have to provide and maintain proper hygiene conditions to meet international standards. Furthermore, proper food management, including food disposal and expired food control, must be improved.
- There was an intensive discussion about trans fats usage. On 10 November 2020, the Government adopted regulation No.4780 and the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Economy and Poverty Reduction, and the Ministry of Finance are working to implement it.. A new set of standards for used cooking oil usage has been introduced based on this newly drafted law. Starting from 2021, the use of trans fats in the food manufacturing processes as well as the import of food items should be limited. The law introduced a ban on the import of items manufactured using used cooking oils in food production in Uzbekistan. If the company starts importing them, it will be a violation of legislation and sanctions will be imposed. Not only Uzbekistan, but the whole of academia has identified the negative consequences of using trans fats. The trans fats in the food industry and their import will be banned by 2025, regardless whether this is in raw materials or finished materials.

ACTION TRACKS

	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
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KEYWORDS

✓	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
✓	Human rights	✓	Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment	✓	Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/5

Action track #3 boost nature- positive Production

• As today's agricultural production processes are often undercover, it is necessary to involve the entire value chain to further promote organic farming efforts. We have to improve irrigation, taking into account the analysis of the soil level of precipitation and provide proper safety mechanisms. The greenhouse's water-saving technology and qualitative infrastructure are also essential to protecting plants from different diseases, insects, and pests.

• In terms of legislation, food quality and safety are subject to different international standards, conventions, and agreements, and confusing them can cause problems. For example, the WHO has an agreement on hygiene measures, which includes food security, pesticides, microbiology, and animal diseases. Food security mainly relates to human health with regard to biological and chemical hazards, and there are also international standards for food security parameters. Although there are reporting requirements for member countries for each area of information, Uzbekistan's commitment is limited due to the limited data collection capacity of the industry, and we hope that this will change in the future. Fortunately, however, there is no need to start from scratch; standards already exist. We need a unified national policy and strategy for the agricultural sector, integrating everything and functional changes at the national legal level.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/5

Action track #4 advance equitable livelihoods

- It is essential to strengthen the standardisation of food supply, such as international standards like ISO, and educate farmers about this knowledge. With proper standardization, we can be more competitive in the international market.
- Great care must be taken to identify the location of the problem and plan appropriately. For example, we need to systematise food processing production because water resources are going to be low this year. In Karakalpakstan, even though we have seen that wheat planting has not progressed at all due to fertility problems, the Government is still forcing farmers to plant wheat. This is a big mistake and a problem with the plan. We need to look at the problem and categorise the chain of command, taking an informed approach.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

✓	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
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✓	Women & Youth Empowerment	✓	Trade-offs
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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/5

Action track #5 build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

• Ensuring that farmers have the freedom to choose what to grow, where to grow it, whom to sell it to, and at what price, is an urgent issue for Uzbekistan. The more economic freedom the manufacturing sector has, the more stable and sustainable the economy will be. In order to achieve economic freedom, knowledge is necessary. We would like to request the donor community to support this matter.

• Food supply reservation storage must be improved immediately to provide enough food for the population. Due to improper storage and mismanagement of the reservation system, we have failed to provide enough food for the population. For instance, this year we had a problem with potato supply, and next year will be onions. I hope the respective agency takes necessary action to address these events.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

• Demand-based Diversification of the Horticulture

While horticultural diversification has attracted international attention and support from many donors in Uzbekistan, careful discussion is needed on what varieties should be diversified. It needs to be looked at comprehensively, reflecting domestic demand and packages that include funding and even infrastructure support for entering the market for other species. Proper infrastructure for proper sales of products should be based on accountability to expand the network, with preservation of the more prominent players at the market.

• Lack of the Quarantine and Inspection Control Aspect

Before making conclusions about food safety, it would be advisable to strengthen and check reports regarding quarantine and inspection control. Although there are instructions for checking products in the laboratory, farmers and other agricultural food producers are not fully aware of these instructions. Due to the massive volume of food productions, it is challenging to regulate and control it using only specialists. Also, as the excessive and improper use of pesticides is a serious issue, we need to reinforce measures about pesticide usage. While there are some sanitation stations in bazaars, technical specialists noticed that we need to control the volume of pesticide usage per region and district.

• Adverse Effects of the Palm Oil Usage

Palm tree oil is categorised as a type of vegetable oil, and it is allowed to be used with equivalent standards. However, in many cases, some companies use vegetable oil instead of animal fats with purpose to reduce the cost of production. . Often companies hide what oil they use. The role of the state in preventing paving on the part of food producers is very important here. The Center for Hygiene Agency is currently working with the Ministries on this possible usage, including the pros and cons of used cooking oils in food manufacturing. We are engaging a number of local and international experts and developing technical regulations on these issues.

• Limited Understanding of the Definition of Food Security

While we are now working on adopting a new strategy on food security in Uzbekistan with international indicators, there are issues related to the limited understanding and knowledge about what food security is. Food security is normally understood as ensuring sufficient food for all populations. However, it must include wider aspects and broader definitions, such as inclusiveness, equitable access, and physical access to nutrition. As Uzbekistan is a landlocked country, we do not have easy access to seafood, and access should be ensured for rural populations, as well as rights to land ownership and access to water resources. All these aspects should be included in the food security definition. It is necessary to ensure access to lands for vulnerable groups who do not have enough capital.

• Need for a Coordinated Approach

We need to implement improvement measures based on scientific proof and careful consideration of local needs and markets. We have recently been working on bringing in unconventional plants from South America and adapting them to the local soil. Since this plant contains many nutrients and is very useful for the human body, we are conducting a test project in Karakalpakstan. Last year, we submitted this project to the President, but when we proposed it to the farmers, they refused to produce it, saying there was no market for this product yet. A programme that does not take into account the local context, even if it is scientifically proven to be effective, cannot be an effective solution.

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