

► **Achieving a Just Transition in the Textile and Garment Sector in Cambodia Technical Stakeholder Workshop**

17 October 2022, Himawari Hotel, Phnom Penh

Key messages

- Social dialogue among industry partners is a key prerequisite of realistic Just Transition planning, with the Government creating - and enforcing - an enabling legal and regulatory environment
- Priorities areas for action on Just Transition are:
 - o Investment in productivity and energy efficiency
 - o Strengthened environmental management at factory level in tandem with improved laws and regulations and enforcement
 - o Skills development for workers and managers
 - o Energy efficiency and waste management through enhanced advisory services
 - o Inclusivity and empowerment
 - o Workers' well-being
- A core group of partners should constitute a tripartite team or working group, to be established by Government, to take the Just Transition planning forward.



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1. Country context

Economic outlook

Cambodia's GDP has grown consistently for more than two decades. In an expanding labour market, a total of 53.0 per cent of total employment is in wage- and salaried employment (2019). Compared to those in self-employment, salaried employment is associated with a higher degree of job security, more regular incomes as well as greater access and eligibility to social protection as well as coverage by employment regulations.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic Cambodia's economy registered a period of negative growth in 2020 with a decline of 6.3 per cent in service sector compared with a 6.2 per cent growth in 2019. The three most affected sectors are tourism, manufacturing and construction. The Cambodia government has implemented key policy responses to deal with COVID-19 economic impacts, including public health measures, vaccination campaign and pragmatic economic policies that resulted in an economic recovery with GDP growth back at 5.1 per cent in 2021.

The Cambodia government launched the "Strategic framework and programs for economic recovery and to promote Cambodia's economic growth in living with COVID-19 in the new normal for 2021- 2023" in December 2021. The strategic framework focuses on 3Rs including Recovery, Reform, and Resilience. In Recovery, the government focuses on solving the structural issues, boosting the socio- economic activities to normal conditions, and stabilize macroeconomic and work conditions for employers and employees. Four sectors are prioritized including agriculture and agro-industry, tourism, garment and other manufacturing subsectors.

Whilst recovering rapidly from the COVID-19 pandemic, Cambodia's long-term economic growth remains uncertain and is associated with the number of infection cases. Therefore, the government's ability to control the spread remains a significant condition for Cambodia's path toward post-pandemic recovery. Depending on the pace of recovery, Cambodia's economic growth is projected to be 5.3 per cent in 2022 and 6.5 per cent in 2023, boosted by an increase in manufacturing export and Foreign Direct Investment.

For the garment sector, the Cambodia Garment, Footwear and Travel Goods Sector Development Strategy 2022-2027 aims to strengthen resilience in these sectors with high-added value, competitive products and services. Besides, the government focuses on the reform to enable friendly trade and investment to maximize trade benefits which contribute to growth, diversification, and competitiveness of the economy.

Towards greener growth

The Royal Government of Cambodia adopted the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan 2014-2023 (CCCSP). The Plan aims at creating a sustainable and inclusive socio-economic environment through social protection, a green economy, human development and productivity, SMEs development, and climate change resilience. The National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSDD) was established in 2015 as an inter-ministerial policy making body, bringing together 36 ministries and agencies and the 25 capital and provincial governors.

Renewable energy as a share of total energy consumption was estimated at around 53.4 per cent in 2018. Renewable energy sources produced 4,255 GWh in 2020, following annual average growth of 26.3 per cent since 2000. Renewable hydropower accounted 90.7 per cent of total renewable energy generation in 2020. Around 17,021 people in Cambodia were employed in the renewable energy sector in 2020, largely in hydropower.

Notwithstanding these encouraging efforts, Cambodia still ranks 154th (of 180 countries) in the Environmental Performance Index (EPI, 2022). The EPI assesses countries on 40 different performance indicators and ranks them according to their national efforts towards environmental health, to enhance ecosystem vitality and mitigate climate change.

Cambodia remains highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to its high dependency on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, water resources, forestry, fisheries, tourism, and other sectors. Projected climate change trends indicate more severe floods and droughts, which is expected to affect Cambodia's GDP by nearly 10 per cent by 2050.

Just transition

Planning for a just transition is a knowledge and resource-intensive process. If undertaken adequately, it can enable green job creation from decarbonization and adaptation activities. Planning should also ensure that sectors, firms, workers and communities affected by efforts to decarbonize receive adequate support, information, training and capacity building to transition towards decent work outcomes. Timely technical support in the form of information, guidance, and training can greatly enhance the quality and outcomes of just transition pathways.

Given the environmental challenges and the climate change policy commitments for the garment sector, the ILO's Decent Work in the Garment Supply Chains in Asia (DWGSCA) project, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) convened a Just Transition planning workshop. The DCWGSA aims to contribute to decent work and environmental sustainability in the garment sector and accelerate a just transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient, nature-friendly, and socially inclusive economy. The workshop with Governments and key stakeholders including workers' and employers' organizations was meant to initiate the planning for a Just Transition in the garments sector in Cambodia. The intended outcome of the workshop was to obtain an agreed set of components and steps of a Just Transition strategy.

The activity concluded the DCWGSA project's support to decent work and environmental sustainability in the garment sector, with a focus on building capacity of industry stakeholders to more effectively apply knowledge and relevant tools. Earlier activities have generated a suite of reports and guides, brought together as a Toolkit for a Just Transition.¹

¹ https://www.ilo.org/asia/media-centre/news/WCMS_806222/lang--en/index.htm

2. Aim and objectives of the workshop

The aim of the workshop was to promote the social dialogue process for a just transition planning while improving the capacity of the social partners to be actively involved in the process. The workshop is focused on the social partners relevant to the textile and garment sector.

The specific objectives of the workshop were to:

- Facilitate a social dialogue process for a just transition among the energy and textile and garment industry constituents and other relevant stakeholders to promote further dialogue processes necessary for a just transition planning.
- To strengthen the capacity of relevant social partners in Just Transition planning processes by discussing relevant key concepts and benchmarks from other regions.
- To identify the specific sustainability and Just Transition issues and context for Indonesia and how this could enable and/ or challenge Just Transition planning processes.
- To identify the priority of prospective actions from each social partner and further areas of support from the ILO for promoting a just transition in the energy and textile and garment sectors.

3. Environmental impacts of the sector

The textile and garment sector has significant negative environmental impacts. These impacts are concentrated at certain points in the supply chain, particularly in four areas:

- weaving, dyeing, and finishing processes in textile manufacturing;
- energy use throughout the supply chain, but concentrated in textile manufacturing and to a lesser extent in garment assembly;
- textile waste associated with garment assembly; and
- transport emissions throughout the supply chain, as materials and then final products are shipped globally.

The most significant impacts, however, are within the first two areas, with the main impacts deriving from the intensity of water resources use, chemical use (including toxic chemicals), waste water discharges and lack of treatment processes, as well as energy use and the carbon intensity of electricity.

Textile manufacturing is very water- and chemical-intensive. The growth and sustainability of the sector is highly dependent on how resources are managed. The textile industry in general has an enormous water footprint ranging from agricultural water consumption for cotton farming, to water consumption in textile printing, dyeing and finishing. The sector is one of the largest users of fresh water in the world, consuming an estimated 79 billion cubic meters of fresh water annually across the entire value chain (United Kingdom 2019). As textile production is prevalent in countries that already have insecure water supplies, water crises are forecast in several textile-producing countries.

The sector is also responsible for severe water pollution by discharging large volumes of wastewater containing hazardous substances into rivers and water courses without appropriate treatment. It is reported that 20 per cent of industrial water pollution globally is attributable to the dyeing and treatment of textiles (EMF 2017).

Moreover, the increase of fast fashion has stimulated demand for fast, cheap, and low-quality goods. Both the growing volume of garment production and how these garments are used and disposed of have resulted in increasing climate change impacts stemming from the garment sector. Between 2005 and 2016, the climate impact of various production stages in the apparel sector increased by 35 per cent and is projected to continue to increase under a business-as-usual scenario (Quantis 2018).

The carbon footprint from the sector is significant, with calculations estimating the sector accounts for more than 8 per cent of total global emissions (Quantis, 2018). The carbon intensity of production is directly related to the carbon intensity of electricity supply in production countries. Over 60 per cent of textiles are used in the garment sector, and a large proportion of garment manufacturing occurs in China and India. India relies heavily on hard coal and natural gas for electricity and heat production, sharply increasing the carbon footprint of each apparel product.

The Paris Agreement sets out to limit global warming to less than 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, with the preferable target of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees. The emission reductions associated with achieving this goal are significant – to reach this target, global emissions will need to decline by about 45 per cent (on 2010 levels) by 2030 and be at net zero by 2050.

Garment sector stakeholders came together in 2018 to commit to climate action through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action. Signatories to

the Charter commit to 30 per cent greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions by 2030 (from a 2015 baseline) and net-zero emissions by 2050.

This is a significant challenge – realizing this 30 per cent reduction in the sector's emissions would require a reduction of more than half a billion tonnes of carbon dioxide across the sector per year by 2030. Meeting this challenge will require system-level changes in the production and consumption of textiles and garments and will likely have significant impacts on how and where garments are produced and the employment associated with this production.

The implications for decarbonization in the sector, and the ambition and timeline for this decarbonization to contribute to the Paris Agreement and commitments in the UNFCCC Fashion Industry Charter on Climate Action are clear. What is less clear are the adjustments that need to be made to working processes by manufacturers in Asia and to their supply chain to reduce emissions.

Decarbonization of the sector will be closely related to the clean energy transition. Encouraging energy efficiency and switching to renewable energy sources, such as solar, hydro or wind power, can significantly reduce emissions and improve the sustainability of textile production. Although there is growing pressure and scrutiny on major international brands and their decarbonization plans, it is these together with national ambitions and strategies for clean energy transition, including energy efficiency incentives and standards, that will drive energy-related emissions reductions in the sector.

4. Just transition for the future of work

The realization that climate policies can have decisive distributional impact among different groups of workers as well as between women and men, has generated support for the concept of a “Just Transition”. Originating from earlier efforts in the 1970’s by Trade Unions to protect and support workers in coal mining and fossil fuel industries that came under pressure in countries like Canada, USA, Germany and Poland, the concept has broadened as a result of the growing recognition how climate change itself is affecting vulnerable groups most. Since the inclusion of the notion of a Just Transition of the workforce in the preamble of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, the concept has gained tracking among Governments, social partners and civil society. Increasingly, it is referred to more broadly to enhance equity and greater inclusiveness through the implementation of climate policies². The principal means to achieve this is by limiting job losses and optimizing employment gains and equity across the labour force, whilst ensuring social protection for those affected.

In accordance with their commitments to the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, countries are adopting and implementing national strategies to reduce GHG emissions, to adapt to climate change effects and to protect the environment and natural resources for future generations. These strategies are leading to positive and adverse changes for enterprises and workers (such as in sectors like energy, construction, transport, forestry, waste management, and so on.). Addressing these effects and ensuring social inclusion and equity cannot be an afterthought, but have to be central in designing and monitoring the policy responses. The societal goal of the transition is to have decent work for all in a low-carbon, climate-resilient society.

Promoting a “Just Transition” means creating a fair and inclusive change in society that benefits all, when taking climate change action and implement environmental policies and strategies. A Just Transition can be initiated by companies, trade unions, civil society and Government. It can be realized at factory level, sector level, provincial level or as a national strategy. The goal of a Just Transition is ensuring decent work for all in a low-emission, climate resilient society.

The ILO’s Guidelines for a Just Transition prioritize (i) social dialogue, (ii) institutional collaboration, and (iii) policy coherence as prerequisites for realizing effective Just Transition Strategies and Plans at national level. The Guidelines have been formulated and endorsed by a tripartite group of Experts in 2015 and endorsed by the ILO’s global Governing Body, with equal voice for Workers, Employers and Governments from its 187 Member States. A “Just Transition for the Workforce” was subsequently included in the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.

The Guidelines propose a suite of policy areas where action for a Just Transition can be initiated. They range from macroeconomic and trade policies, sector policies, active labour market and enterprise policies, skills development to occupational and health policies and social protection. The actual resulting policy towards a just transition will differ from country to country, from sector to sector, given national circumstances and conditions. The relevance and strength of a Just Transition strategy will largely depend on effectiveness of social dialogue and strong political leadership.

Increasingly, countries are shaping just transition strategies. Many of them focus on reshaping the energy sector, in particular to enable the phasing down of coal³. Others have taken a whole-of- Government approach, realizing that the vulnerability to climate change and the need to take rigorous adaptation measures, as well as mitigation, will induce economic and social changes across all sectors and localities in the country.⁴

In response to the demand for guidance on Just Transition, several international agencies have documented best practices and developed tools and guidelines⁵. In respect to the textile and garment sector the ILO has produced

² The G7 Development Ministers, for example, announced their support for Just Energy Transition Partnerships in their May, 2022 meeting in Berlin.

³ Examples are South Africa, Mexico and India.

⁴ An example is The Philippines.

⁵ See for example: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/publication/wcms_826060.pdf

a toolkit for a Just Transition, with many practical applications⁶.

Through social dialogue and stakeholder consultation, a strategy towards a Just Transition can be developed. For the elaboration of the strategy, the following issues should be taken into consideration:

- What are the issues and the drivers towards higher environmental sustainability in the country?
- What are the expected effects on enterprises, (informal) workers and communities of environmental policies and market changes?
- How can workers and communities be involved to steer the responses and actions?
- How can social inclusion and gender equality be ensured?
- What are the building blocks and who do we need to build a common strategy and shared action plan?

Guidance for planning a national strategy

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⁶ See https://www.ilo.org/asia/media-centre/news/WCMS_806222/lang--en/index.htm

5. Just transition for the future of work

The workshop was structured around the following planning steps, stimulating participants to address key issues through interactive group sessions:

Step	Key questions
1. Understanding impacts and opportunities	How will transition occur? Who and how will be impacted, what opportunities?
2. Identifying solutions and responses	What do we want our sector be like? What solutions and responses are available/ possible? How do we implement?
3. Developing appropriate mechanisms	What are the appropriate mechanisms needed by the sector to address environmental management? The mechanisms can include measures related to training, skills developments, incentives, entrepreneurship, and enterprise.
4. Resourcing the transition	What resources do we need? Types – financial, knowledge, networks?
5. Managing the strategy	Who will lead and coordinate? Who needs to be involved? How will progress and results of implementation be measured?

Findings:

- There is a policy gap as well as lack of laws, regulations and standard operating procedures: the relevant Ministries should address this in dialogue with stakeholders
- Lack of clear investment plans among factories; absence of a strategy or management system to implement and improve environmental conditions
- Lack of technology and equipment to support environmental operations; lack of finance and incentives for investments
- Insufficient environmental evaluation, assessment and audit, due to lack of technical expertise
- in-house and among consultants - and weak regulatory requirements
- Lack of skills and knowledge among workers and managers to understand and apply environmental regulations and clean production practices, to apply recommendations from audit reports and guidelines on chemical usage and safety
- Insufficient working conditions for workers; women workers are more vulnerable esp. during pregnancy
- Weak organization among workers and related collective bargaining power; women workers are affected more.

Responsive action

- The Ministry of MISTRI is implementing three relevant initiatives:
 - (i) Promoting environmental practices at the work-place (“Green work”)
 - (ii) Managing a National Productivity Centre
 - (iii) Promoting 5S and launching a competition for the clean production award.
- H&M has initiated its own programme for greening the supply chain, consisting of grant financing for improving environmental business models and technical assistance for suppliers. Eventually H&M intends to include environmental eligibility criteria in contracting suppliers.

Priorities for further action

Proposals for responsive action were made around six issues. These were:

- I. Investment in productivity and energy efficiency: acquiring and applying technology improvements, accessing renewable energy sources and improving work-place arrangements
- II. Strengthened environmental management at factory level in tandem with improved laws and regulations: guiding the development and strengthening of factory management systems on environmental impact, including regular assessments, preventive and corrective action with timeframe and indicators, and enforcement.
- III. Skills development: ensuring managers and workers have to required knowledge and competence to identify and adopt changes in the business model and work-place practices
- IV. Energy efficiency and waste management: strengthening advisory capacity to improve energy efficiency, waste water management and solid waste disposal (Knowledge-Intensive Business Services)
- V. Inclusivity: ensuring the key role of women is taken fully on board and gender equality is improved
- VI. Workers' well-being: improving working conditions for female and male workers at the work- place and through labour contracts (possibly through collective bargaining agreements).

Prioritisation

Participants gave workers' well-being the top priority for further work on a just transitions, followed by skills development.

Next steps

The development of mechanisms for implementation was considered the most important next step. Resourcing, and communication, were also given importance.

Although participants were given the option to commit to contribute towards bringing stakeholders together in a team, few did so. This may signal the sentiment that no one single stakeholder feels sufficiently well placed to lead a dedicated team for the transition as a whole. Yet some participants expressed commitment to work in a team on the issue of workers' well-being.

6. Follow-up

The workshops represent an important step towards a longer process of planning and implementation. Participants requested support in the form of guidelines for implementation, along with good practices. Consideration was given to establishing a network or platform, or using existing mechanisms where relevant, for exchange, dialogue and joint initiatives. Stakeholder will have to think how to keep going forward, possibly through a tripartite working group on Just Transition, to be established by government.

► Acknowledgement

The highlights have been prepared for the SIDA funded ILO project Decent Work in the Garment Sector Supply Chains in Asia project. We gratefully acknowledge the funding from The Swedish Development Agency (SIDA) to undertake this project.

The document was prepared by Dr Samantha Sharpe, Associate Professor at the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF), University of Technology Sydney (UTS), under the direction of Dr Cristina Martinez, Senior Specialist Environment and Decent Work of the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and with inputs from the project team including Mr Saroeun Soeung (ILO National Consultant), Mr Eric Roeder (Technical Specialist Green Jobs, Climate Change and Resilience through Just Transition, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific), and Mr Kees van der Ree (ILO Senior Green Jobs Consultant).

We would like to thank colleagues for the guidance and support, including Mr Graham Buckley, Director of the ILO Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mr Tun Sophorn, National Coordinator Cambodia, and Ms Sara Park, Better Work Cambodia Programme Manager. Also, Mr David Williams, Project Manager, Ms Hongye Pei, Mr Monty Chanthapanya, Ms Supaporn Runtasevee, and Ms Wilawan Wiseschinda for their contributions and support to produce this document.

We would like to also express our appreciation to all the constituents and other stakeholders for their generous support and participation in this project.

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▶ Annex I. Agenda

Achieving a Just Transition in the Textile and Garment Sector in Asia Technical Stakeholder Workshop ILO – Cambodia

17 October 2022 (09.00 – 16.00)

Venue: Hotel Himawari, Phnom Penh

MC: Mr *Soeung Saroeun*, ILO Consultant

Time	Activities
20 minutes (09.00am)	<p>Welcome, introductions and workshop overview Facilitator: Mr <i>Soeung Saroeun</i>, ILO Expert</p> <p>Welcome by Mr <i>Tun Sophorn</i>, ILO Country Office Cambodia Welcome by PAGE representative</p> <p>Overview of the aims and objectives of the workshop, plus quick overview of the activities, Associate Professor <i>Samantha Sharpe</i>, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University Technology Sydney</p>
90 minutes (09.20 – 09.50)	<p>Session 1 - Just transition concept Facilitator: Mr <i>Eric Roeder</i>, Technical Specialist Green Jobs, Climate Change and Resilience, ILO ROAP</p> <p><i>Presentations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of the Just Transition concept - Dr <i>Cristina Martinez</i>, Sr Specialist Environment and Decent Work, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific) and Mr <i>Kees van der Ree</i>, ILO Expert (10 mins) - Overview of impacts and implications of decarbonisation and environmental sustainability in the sector - Associate Professor <i>Samantha Sharpe</i>, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University Technology Sydney (10 mins)
(09.50 – 10.30)	<p>Question and answers (10 mins)</p> <p>Facilitator: <i>Kees van der Ree</i> <i>Brainstorming activity: Mapping the main dimensions and challenges of environmental sustainability and just transition in the “hotspots”. (40 mins).</i></p> <p><i>Around their tables, participants discuss and write down their views on A3 cards, which will later be posted on a board in the room.</i></p> <p>Introduction of the activity, <i>Kees van der Ree</i></p> <p>Facilitators: Mr <i>Soeung Saroeun</i>, Mr <i>Sophorn</i>, Ms <i>Sara Park</i>, <i>Carina K.</i>, <i>Karina Kallio</i></p>
20 minutes (10.30-10.50)	Networking break

Time	Activities
<p>100 minutes (10.50 – 11.10)</p>	<p>Session 2 – Just transition planning and governance Facilitator: Mr <i>Kees Van der Ree</i>, ILO</p> <p><i>Plenary report back</i> (20 minutes) – report back from previous break out activity using cards posted on a board or the wall of the room.</p>
<p>(11.10 – 11.25) (11.25 – 12.30)</p>	<p><i>Presentations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is just transition planning – dialogue and governance (15 mins) (Samantha Sharpe and Karina Kallio, University of Technology Sydney) <p><i>Break out activity</i> – (Introduced by Kees van der Ree) Just Transition options analysis (65 mins)</p> <p><i>Using the results from the previous session of BRAINSTORMING on the dimensions and challenges, as a group identify what will be the possible responses or solutions for the garment sector in Cambodia and record your ideas on A3 cards. Think what can be done, and who may be able to contribute.</i></p> <p>Facilitators: Mr <i>Soeung Saroeun</i>, Mr <i>Sophorn</i>, Ms <i>Sara Park Carina K.</i>, <i>Katerina Veen</i></p>
<p>60 minutes (12.30pm-1.30pm) Networking lunch</p>	
<p>100 minutes (1.30-1.50pm) (1.50 – 2.40) (2.40 – 3.00) (3.00 – 3.20)</p>	<p>Session 3 – Just transition planning in practice: Facilitator: Mr <i>Kees Van der Ree</i>, ILO</p> <p><i>Plenary report back</i> (20mins) – report back groups from previous session</p> <p><i>Break out activity</i> – Just Transition planning (50mins). Introduced by Samantha Sharpe, UTS.</p> <p><i>Using the results from the two break out sessions, as a group start creating a just transition plan/strategy? including identifying the key actions and actors (who takes responsibility for what), timelines, resources needed, how JT plans will be operationalised, what will success look like?</i></p> <p>Facilitators: Mr <i>Soeung Saroeun</i>, Mr <i>Sophorn</i>, Ms <i>Sara Park Carina K.</i>, <i>Karina Kallio</i></p> <p>Plenary report back (20mins) – report back from break out activity</p> <p><i>What's next? Open discussion about follow up action, possibly with prioritization and partners taking up roles.</i></p>

Time	Activities
(3:20-3:40)	<p>Key take aways</p> <p>Facilitator: <i>Eric Roeder</i>, Technical Specialist Green Jobs, Climate Change and Resilience, ILO ROAP</p> <p>Ms <i>Howe Anastacia</i>, H&M Country Representative H.E. Dr. <i>Ken Loo</i>, Secretary General at Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC) Ms Sara Park, ILO, Better Factories Cambodia A/P <i>Samantha Sharpe</i>, UTS Mr <i>Kees Van der Ree</i>, ILO</p>
(3:40– 4:00)	<p>Closing</p> <p>Facilitator: Mr <i>Soeung Saroeun</i>, ILO Expert Dr <i>Cristina Martinez</i>, ILO Mr <i>Tun Sophorn</i>, ILO Country Office Cambodia</p>
4:00	<p>Networking Coffee</p> <p>សម្រេច / Thank you</p>

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