

COOPERATION IN INTERNATIONAL  
WATERS IN AFRICA



# Gender and Social Inclusion Framework

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## I. Introduction



Established in 2010, the Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) supports riparian governments to strengthen cooperative management and development of water resources in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve sustainable climate-resilient growth and poverty reduction. As a Multi-Donor Partnership of the World Bank, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is a priority for the CIWA program.

At the programmatic or institutional level, efforts are focused on gender and governance to create an enabling environment for female decision makers to thrive, identifying opportunities for women to participate in leadership positions at the institutional level and providing direct support to CIWA's partners to enable them to mainstream gender and social inclusion into their work. At the project level, CIWA follows the project preparation procedures and guidelines set out by the Bank such that gender equality and social inclusion is considered throughout the project cycle.

This Gender and Social Inclusion Framework has been prepared as a living document to guide CIWA's operations into the future as well as to be adapted as new approaches and lessons learnt related to gender and social inclusion emerge within the transboundary landscape.

As part of CIWA's commitment to ensure that gender and social inclusion is represented in all of its work, the GESI Framework puts forward an overarching strategic approach on gender equality and social inclusion aligned to the concept of transformation that facilitates a harmonized and integrated approach to gender and social inclusion in all of CIWA's work.

By promoting a holistic and integrated focus on women, men and other vulnerable populations, the Framework also seeks to ensure that CIWA's investments in transboundary water management result in project outcomes that benefit all women and men as well as girls and boys associated with the project. Targeted to CIWA staff, country partners and development partners, it includes a strategic framework and highlights key action points related to gender and social inclusion and transboundary water management that build upon analysis of lessons learned.

The GESI Framework is aligned to the World Bank Group's commitment to addressing GESI as part of its overall efforts to achieve the Bank's twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. It also takes into account other efforts within the Bank and through other organizations to promote gender and social inclusion.



## II. Objective of the Framework



The objective of the CIWA GESI Framework is to mainstream gender and social inclusion considerations into CIWA's work with the aim to catalyze transformative change to achieve sustainable gender equality and inclusion in water resource management and development.

The strategy seeks to:

Build upon the lessons learned to enhance recognition of gender and social inclusion issues within the context of transboundary water management;

Provide the strategic focus required to scale up gender equality and social inclusion across the different levels of CIWA's work;

Articulate key action points for the CIWA program to advance gender equality and social inclusion within the transboundary water context; and

Reinforce the World Bank Group's own commitment to gender and social inclusion as articulated in its Gender Strategy (FY2016-2023).

### III. Concepts of Gender and Social Inclusion

#### Gender is:

About women, girls, men and boys including the different things that women and men think and do, and the relationships between them.

**Social Inclusion** assumes that men and women are not homogeneous. Instead, they are stratified by age, ethnic origin, beliefs and practices, socio-cultural situation and other vulnerabilities. Social inclusion, therefore, involves the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society.

By making this distinction it is necessary to target the specific disadvantage of either women or men, to establish separate spaces for men and women while ensuring that strategies for gender equality engage all key stakeholders such that the broader dimensions of social inclusion and vulnerability are adequately captured.

**Gender equality** is about changing the norms and expectations about female and male roles and ultimately changing power relations by fostering a more balanced distribution of power within governments, companies, formal and informal institutions and households.<sup>1</sup>

#### Gender is not:

**Only about women and girls:** Men and boys should also be part of the GESI equation.

**Only women's responsibility:** For real change to happen, everyone needs to be involved.

**A Western or foreign concept:** Gender equality is a global commitment articulated in international regional and national commitments to which countries worldwide are signatories.

**An attempt to take away the rights of men and boys:** Human rights are universal, which means that they apply to all human beings.

**Only an issue for gender specialists:** Relying solely on gender specialists cannot tackle the main drivers of gender inequality and social exclusion. Everyone needs to be involved.

<sup>1</sup> World Bank Group Gender Strategy (2016-2023).

## IV. Lessons Learned

The GESI Framework draws on the findings and lessons learned from a baseline study on CIWA's performance on gender and social inclusion in May 2020. It included a desk-based literature review, online survey and consultations with CIWA staff, development partners and country partners including River Basin Organizations (RBOs), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and national governments. It also builds upon lessons learned

from CIWA's existing efforts to promote and support the integration of GESI considerations into its work. Key findings that account for the low participation of women in transboundary water management at either the institutional or project level as well as limited progress in addressing gender inequalities and social exclusion within the transboundary water management context include:



**Water is a male-dominated sector:** This makes it difficult for women to find a safe and friendly setting to express their views, participate in meetings and play a leadership role.

**Governance structures fail to accommodate women.** Laws, policies and strategies at the transboundary level are mostly silent on the promotion of gender issues. This limits the level of accountability and capacity to ensure that GESI issues are adequately addressed.

**Women face socio-cultural barriers to working on water resource management.** Barriers are driven by strong patriarchal values in most African societies that position men as the key decision makers and holders of power and limit women's access and control over resources.

**Women tend to be stereotyped as resource users.** Despite the key role they play as custodians of water as well as the heavy burden they bear when water is in short supply, women's role tends to be pigeonholed into the reproductive sphere. This limits how they are included and what role they play at the project and institutional level.

**Water ministries and government departments tend to be led by men.** This is linked to obstacles women face in entering or operating in the water sector including a lack of access to education, sexual harassment, job insecurity and comparatively lower pay levels.<sup>2</sup>

**Failure to move from commitment to implementation.** Even when countries sign on to international, regional or national agreements on gender and social inclusion, there is often a lack of capacity and willingness to apply the necessary financial and technical resources.

**Regional institutions have achieved less progress.** Regional institutions addressing transboundary water management involve negotiations at the political level requiring the cooperation and agreement of multiple and often competing countries.<sup>3</sup> This makes it difficult to ensure a consistent and harmonized approach to tackling GESI issues.

<sup>2</sup> Troell, Jessica and Yaari, Elizabeth. "Tapping our Potential: Women's Water Leadership in the Nile Basin", Policy Paper, July 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Earle, Anton and Bazilli, Susan. "A gendered critique of transboundary water management" 2013, Feminist Critique.



**Women are denied access to water governance processes:** Although water governance is anticipated to become a cornerstone of global water security, space for women to participate in political decision making is limited.

**A lack of capacity and awareness.** Stakeholders at all levels and across all sectors tend to lack the capacity and understanding of why and how to apply GESI considerations. This means that local-level projects and institutional programming is frequently gender blind.

**Lack of a systematic approach:** Gender and social inclusion tends to be assigned to one individual or ministry thereby limiting the ability to promote a systematic approach. Projects tend to include stand-alone interventions rather than integrating GESI considerations at all levels and across all sectors where the project is being implemented.

**Failure to allocate adequate resources.** Allocating sufficient funding to apply a GESI lens at the project and program level throughout the project cycle is often overlooked because of a lack of appreciation of GESI's central importance to a project's success.

**Gender is complex:** An understanding of the complex relationships between men and women or the ways in which gender norms are embedded in institutions, market forces and cultural interactions is often not reflected in programmes and projects, particularly in sectors that are technical and male dominated including water resource management.

**One-off interventions:** Single interventions are inadequate to deal with the complex nature of gender inequality and social inclusion. To facilitate changes in norms and beliefs that drive gender inequality and social exclusion requires multiple interventions at multiple levels.

**Monitoring and evaluation is inadequate:** At both the program and project level, the gathering and analysis of disaggregated data is frequently overlooked. This is compounded by a failure to develop indicators or plan for monitoring that reflects GESI considerations.

## V. A Systematic Approach to Promote a Transformation within Gender and Social Inclusion



Worldwide, there is a growing recognition that being “gender aware” is insufficient.<sup>4</sup>

For significant sustainable change to happen, institutional and systemic transformations related to gender and power need to occur. Taking steps to foster a gender transformative approach enables deeper change at both the individual and societal levels by facilitating policy change supported by implementation mechanisms, such as budgeting or programming. A transformative approach moves away from treating the symptom of gender inequality and focuses instead on challenging those structures that reinforce exclusion at its base. It stems from a recognition that changing deep-seated patriarchal norms and values is not limited to communities and families. It also needs to be tackled within institutions and systems which often perpetuate gender inequalities. Successful gender-transformative approaches move beyond targeting the typical ministries such as Gender and Social Development to ensure the broadest sectoral reach including the Ministry of Finance and Water.

To do so requires tackling fundamental changes at all levels of society and across all sectors on an ongoing basis. As illustrated in the **diagram on page 9**,<sup>5</sup> it requires approaches and actions that move along the Gender and Social Inclusion Continuum. These approaches should range

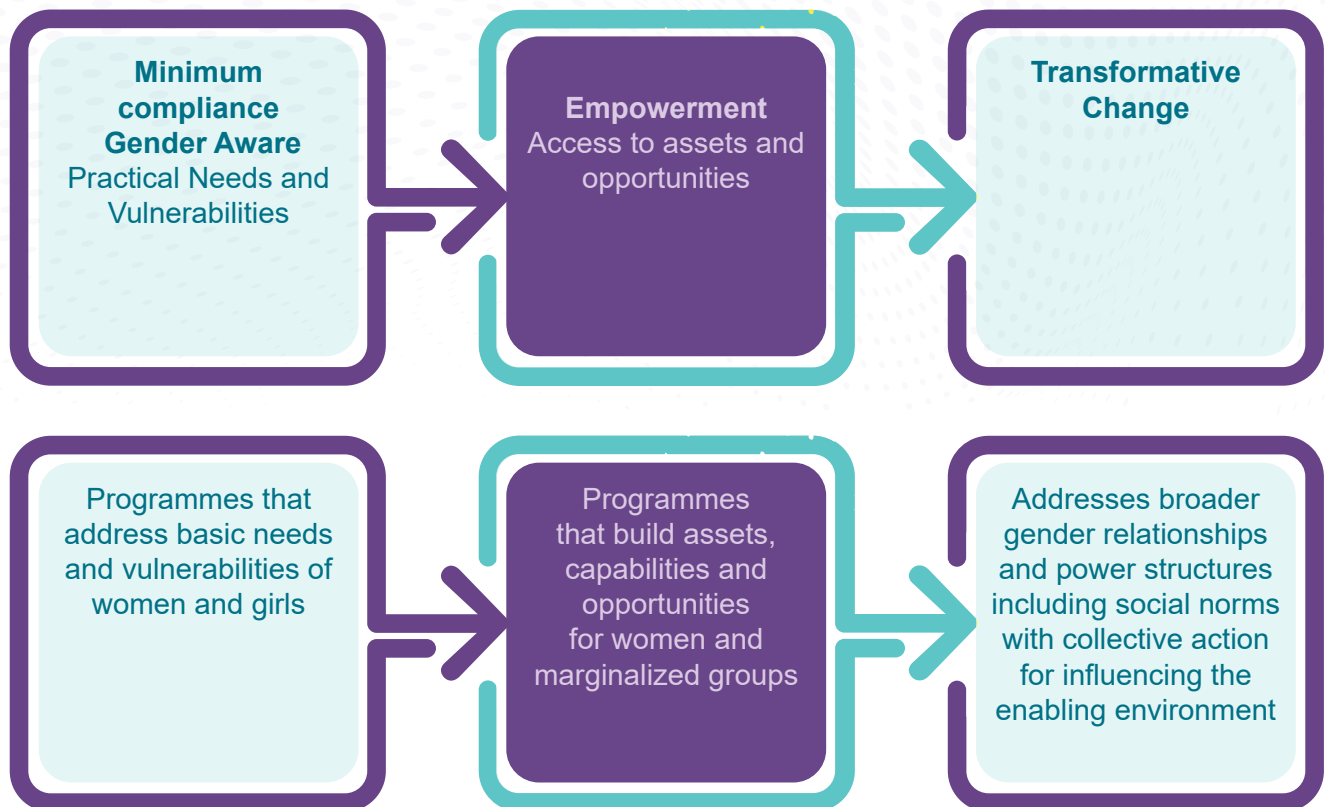
from minimum compliance on actions that address women’s practical and reproductive needs, to empowerment of women to enable them to access decision-making opportunities. They should culminate in transformative change where the broader gender relationships and power structures are addressed through collective action.

A deeper investigation of multiple overlapping differences and inequities is needed while ensuring that all people regardless of sex, ethnicity, ability and other vulnerabilities can all derive benefits. It also requires moving away from one-off interventions and counting heads towards actions that demonstrate concrete changes in gender relationships and power structures. There is a need for collective engagement including implementing measures such as training and awareness raising to ensure that everyone buys into and engages with the merits of applying a gender and social inclusion lens throughout the project cycle or at all levels of an institution. Gender-transformative approaches need to be grounded in strong gender analysis and an understanding of local contexts. It therefore requires the application of a GESI lens to all of CIWA’s work while ensuring that all programme staff and partners have a well-developed understanding of GESI and its applicability to the transboundary water management context.

<sup>4</sup> “Gender Equality” International Development Research Centre, April 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Framework developed by developed by Caroline Moser with Social Development for the DFID-funded Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development (ICED) Facility.





## VI. CIWA's Transformative Approach and Actions



### Adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to gender and social inclusion:

In keeping with the principles of a transformative approach, water resource management, sustainable development, and gender are interlinked and have to be addressed in an integrated and holistic manner.

Actions will be taken to ensure that GESI considerations are integrated throughout the project cycle and at all levels and sectors of the transboundary institutions that the CIWA program supports. Gender analysis will be systematically applied within the context of policy, programme and project design and implementation.

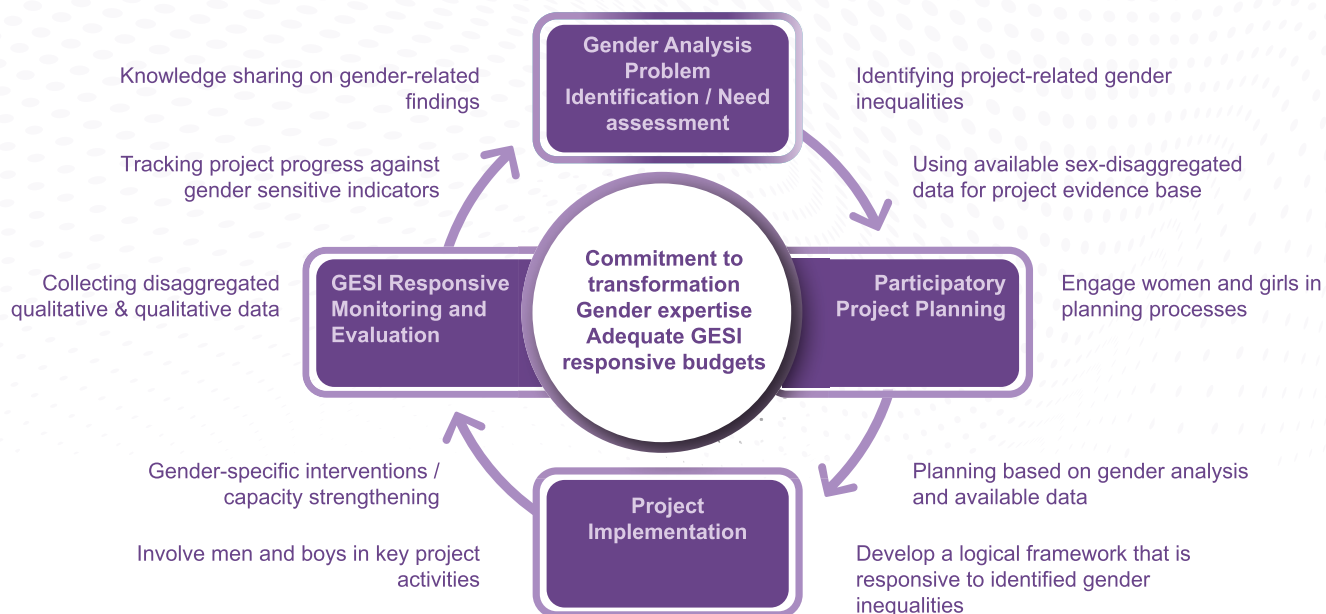
Actions will also be taken to facilitate outreach and coordination with CIWA partners or related international and local organizations that are undertaking activities that have the potential to complement or reinforce GESI actions taken through CIWA-funded programs.

### Strengthen internal and partner capacity on gender and social inclusion:

Strengthening CIWA's capacity on gender and social inclusion is critical to ensuring a shared vision across the programme as well as increased knowledge and capacity amongst CIWA staff, partners and external stakeholders about how and why the integration of GESI considerations is critical to the program's success.

Developing and delivering capacity building and coaching to staff and partners will be provided as a means of securing a shared understanding and ownership of the overarching framework for gender and social inclusion while fostering a commitment for everyone to take responsibility for their role in ensuring the delivery of CIWA's Gender and Social Inclusion agenda.

In addition to the delivery of broad-based capacity building, actions will include an analysis of which stakeholders within the wider programme are able to affect change or play a championship role on gender equality and social inclusion followed by the provision of targeted capacity building.





## VI. CIWA's Transformative Approach and Actions: (cont)

### Bridge knowledge and data gaps:

Facilitating knowledge management and fostering a learning culture is critical to gathering best practices and lessons learned that can contribute to improving approaches to mainstreaming GESI considerations as well as to identify specific gender and social inclusion gaps that require targeted interventions. Collection and analysis of evidence across the programme, including systematic collection of sex, age and poverty disaggregated data will be a key activity as part of project preparation to foster improvements in the application of gender and social inclusion analysis both internally and with external partners and stakeholders.

Information on gender equality and social inclusion, including strategies, baseline studies as well as the collection of qualitative and quantitative data will form part of the process to guide the development and implementation of gender-sensitive projects. The collection and analysis of data and other relevant evidence will also seek to identify actionable approaches to tackling systemic barriers to gender equality and social inclusion.

Actions will be taken to share and learn about gender and social inclusion issues of relevance to the transboundary context, including the collection and dissemination of good practices and success stories from project partners.

### Ensure monitoring and evaluation is sensitive to gender and social inclusion: Key Actions:

For a transformative approach to be successful, it needs to incorporate monitoring and evaluation strategies and approaches that consider gender and social inclusion dimensions. At the front end, funding will be allocated and actions taken to ensure that disaggregated data about gender disparities and social exclusions are systematically collected and analyzed to ensure GESI considerations are integrated as part of project development, implementation and monitoring of results.

Project indicators will also be required to include reference to gender and social inclusion. As part of the monitoring process, GESI analysis will be undertaken to determine if progress is being made on advancing gender and social inclusion within each project. Where necessary and possible, log frames will be revised to include sex disaggregated information, including targets and indicators. Mid-term and final evaluations of projects and programs will ensure that GESI considerations are effectively integrated.

At the programming level, additional indicators that incorporate gender and social inclusion will be developed, and GESI analysis will form part of the mid-term review and final evaluation process.

## Key Actions:

The following are key action points that will be taken at the CIWA program and project level:

### Program Level

#### **Prepare a Gender and Social Inclusion Framework:**

The framework document is being developed as an evergreen document that can be adapted when new evidence or lessons learned on GESI and its relevance to transboundary water are identified. It will provide guidance and proposed actions to CIWA staff, development partners and country partners about how to apply a GESI lens to CIWA's work taking into consideration lessons learned in addressing GESI within the transboundary water context.

#### **Adopt and promote a transformative approach:**

CIWA will play a leadership role in promoting the adoption of a transformative approach through engagement with relevant stakeholders, establishment of strategic partnerships as well as advocating that key documents systematically promote GESI at all levels and across all sectors of the transboundary water environment where CIWA works. Case studies of successful transformative approaches will be developed to demonstrate the success factors and challenges of applying a transformative approach.

#### **Enhance GESI in M&E and knowledge management:**

Additional indicators related to CIWA's work at the program level will be developed to demonstrate the program's commitment to ensuring that GESI is a central part of CIWA's work. Existing indicators will also be reviewed to identify opportunities to integrate GESI considerations. Collection and packaging of evidence on GESI and transboundary water will be shared with CIWA staff and partners through virtual platforms.

### Project Level

#### **Undertake a systematic review of project documents:**

All of CIWA's project documents will be reviewed to ensure that GESI is integrated throughout the project cycle and across all sectors where the project will be operating. Technical expertise will be provided to ensure that project teams understand the rationale for proposed GESI approaches and language. Complementary coaching will help to secure buy-in for the adoption of GESI approaches and inclusion of GESI references.

#### **Integrate a transformative approach into project planning and implementation:**

Project planning and implementation will factor in the need to undertake multiple interventions across a diversity of sectors to facilitate transformative change. CIWA projects will apply the understanding that addressing gender inequality and social exclusion requires the engagement of multiple stakeholders across a diversity of sectors by allocating resources to enable stakeholder mapping and engagement with a diversity of stakeholders.

#### **Incorporate GESI into M&E work:**

As part of the process to develop a results frameworks and indicators for projects, GESI considerations will be systematically integrated. Where possible, disaggregated data will be collected and used to guide the design of projects and tracking of results. Case studies that document successes and challenges for projects applying a GESI lens will be prepared and disseminated to facilitate expanded learning on how to apply a transformative approach within projects.

## Key Actions:

### Program Level

**Ensure sustained oversight of GESI interventions:** CIWA management will champion the integration of GESI into all of its work on an ongoing basis. This will include ensuring the allocation of sufficient financial and technical resources as part of the CIWA budgeting process to facilitate the integration of a GESI perspective at the programming and project level over the short, medium and longer term.

**GESI capacity building:** A capacity building program targeted to staff and partners will be developed and pilot tested before broad-based roll-out. Training will be two-fold: 1) introduce key concepts and issues to establish a common understanding of GESI's relevance within the transboundary context; 2) Training on how to apply GESI throughout the project cycle to enable staff to understand how to concretely apply GESI at the project level.

**Identify and/or develop GESI tools and resources:** User-friendly tools will be provided to staff and partners to assist them to better understand where, why and how to apply a gender lens as part of their overall work. A stock-taking exercise of existing tools will be undertaken to identify existing resources before developing new material. Collaboration on the development of tools and resources will be explored.

**Unpack and apply social inclusion to trans-boundary water initiatives:** The CIWA program will promote and integrate the perspective that men and women are not homogeneous as part of its overall approach to identifying and working with relevant stakeholders at the institutional and project level. Project material and external communication will reinforce the need to unpack the multiple identities and characteristics of men and women involved in CIWA projects.

### Project Level

**Allocate financial and human resources for ongoing GESI support throughout the project cycle:** As part of the budgeting process for CIWA projects, funding will be allocated to achieve GESI objectives. Budgeting will also consider the need for GESI technical expertise to guide project design and implementation. Monitoring and evaluation exercises will incorporate GESI considerations.

**GESI capacity building:** To facilitate a transformative approach, the capacity building program will be targeted to staff and partners working across multiple sectors and activities. Targeted training and coaching will be provided in cases where there is a need to address specific GESI challenges. To ensure that GESI learning is sustained, the program will plan and allocate the necessary resources to ensure regular refresher training for staff and partners.

**Apply GESI tools and resources throughout the project cycle: planning, implementation and M&E:** GESI tools and resources will be shared with CIWA staff and partners to facilitate their application as part of the design, implementation and monitoring of the GESI dimensions of projects. Workshops that facilitate the direct application of tools to real-life project contexts will also be organized.

**Undertake stakeholder mapping to identify vulnerabilities within target populations:** CIWA's approach to stakeholder engagement will identify and document the vulnerable populations of relevance to the specific country or regional context where a project is operating. Challenges faced by specific vulnerable populations will be identified including strategies to respond to these challenges.



## VII. How to Engage on GESI with CIWA



In keeping with the promotion of a transformative approach, CIWA's efforts to address and promote gender and social inclusion will not be limited to engagement and targeting of its own staff, country partners and development partners. To achieve a transformation in terms of overcoming gender inequality and social exclusion in the transboundary water context requires the establishment and engagement with a community of stakeholders who are committed to working together. Working collectively with a diversity of stakeholders offers the greatest potential to

overcome some of the deeply-seated obstacles that sustain inequalities and continue to exclude women and other vulnerable populations from playing a key role in advancing improvements in how transboundary water is managed. Anyone interested in advancing efforts to address gender and social inclusion within the transboundary water context can reach out to CIWA, either at the Program level ([contactciwa@worldbank.org](mailto:contactciwa@worldbank.org)), or through the citizen engagement mechanisms built into the different CIWA-funded projects.

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