

Terms of Reference (ToR)
ADVERTISEMENT
**Consultant for Gender-sensitive needs assessments to identify employment
barriers faced by young women**
(ONLY FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT)

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This document outlines the Terms of Reference for a Rapid Labor Market Assessment (RLMA) research study. This study will analyze the local labor market in Bangladesh and its prospects for youth (ages 18-28 yrs) completing the Pathways to Prosperity: Empowering Young Women for program. This includes an analysis of the availability of jobs, the identification of suitable sectors and employers, and opportunities for career progression. Furthermore, a central component of this study is a comprehensive Employment Ecosystem Mapping, which will identify the key actors, platforms, and events that connect youth to opportunities in the regions where the program operates. The study will also detail the alignment of their combined acquired skills (from both the Pathways to Prosperity: Empowering Young Women for program and their prior/on-going education with current and future labor market demands, specifically detailing the skills required for relevant jobs, and the most effective channels through which youth can gain these opportunities.

1.1 Project Summary

Recognizing the unmet needs and untapped potential of young women, this Project designed to empower communities in Satkhira Sadar, Debhata, and Ashashuni upazilas under Satkhira district through targeted skills development and entrepreneurship training. These regions face significant challenges including high youth unemployment, limited access to vocational education, and vulnerability to climate-induced economic disruptions. According to upazila-wise data from the Bangladesh government, literacy rates in Satkhira Sadar (65.2%), Debhata (61.8%), and Ashashuni (59.4%) reflect a need for enhanced educational and vocational support. In Bangladesh's national NEET rate for youth aged 15–24 was approximately 19.1% in 2022, with significantly higher rates among young women. Unemployment among youth in rural areas like Satkhira tends to be underreported due to informal labor and seasonal work, but underemployment and lack of decent work are persistent issues. Given the relatively low literacy rates in Satkhira Sadar (65.2%), Debhata (61.8%), and Ashashuni (59.4%), it's reasonable to infer that NEET rates in these upazilas may exceed the national average, especially among young women facing compounded barriers.

1.2 Purpose, Objectives and Scope

Purpose:

The primary goal of this rapid labor market assessment is to provide a clear, actionable roadmap that will directly improve our employment program's effectiveness and increase the successful placement and retention of our program participants into stable, entry-level jobs.

The study main objectives to study are:

- 1) **To examine the gender-specific barriers that young women** encounter in accessing and sustaining employment, with the aim of informing policies and programs that promote equitable workforce participation.
- 2) **Analyze the current and future demand within the local labor markets of Satkhira:** This includes identifying the most promising and accessible training opportunities and employment areas, the sectors.
- 3) **Co-create a comprehensive Youth Employment Ecosystem Mapping within the geographic scope of the Pathways to Prosperity: Empowering Young Women for program in Bangladesh:** The study will be a highly collaborative process, with the consultant working closely with the Save the Children (SC) team and partner throughout the data collection phase. This active partnership is critical to distinguish between existing and new information for SC and to ensure the mapping identifies new opportunities beyond SC's current network. The study will map the key context-specific actors, platforms, and opportunities that influence youth training and employment outcomes. The goal is to create a holistic view of the local landscape and the quality of existing opportunities to identify potential partnerships or systems for the PROJECT program to leverage. Once the ecosystem mapping is complete, the study team will facilitate a Prioritization Workshop with the Save the Children team. The purpose of this workshop is to collaboratively analyze the mapped data and categorize each opportunity to create a phased engagement strategy. This mapping will include:
 - a) **Training provider:** Identify the institutions that have the capacity, credibility, and resources to deliver high-quality skills development aligned with labor market needs. The process typically assesses a center's infrastructure, trainer qualifications, curriculum relevance, accessibility for women and youth with disabilities, and readiness to integrate digital or blended learning approaches. It also considers the track record of delivering practical, demand-driven training, and ability to provide safe, inclusive learning environments
 - b) **Key Employers:** Identifying and profiling organizations across relevant sectors that are actively hiring for apprenticeship, Internship and entry-level roles suitable for project youth and aligned with SC's values and policies (e.g., diversity, equity and inclusion policy or equivalent, reasonable accommodation policy, gender equality policy). Detail the average number of entry-level positions these employers hire per year, the specific job titles/positions, and skill sets required for these roles.
 - c) **Employment Platforms and Organizations:** Existing digital and physical platforms and organizations that connect youth with employment opportunities. This includes, Job fair job boards, career hubs, job placement organizations, government portals, and social impact networks. Identify youth employment-related programs that these organizations and institutions host and the services those programs offer.
 - d) **Government and Institutional Stakeholders:** Key government agencies, ministries (e.g. Department of Youth Development Department of Social Service, BSCIC , TTC , TSC), and other public or quasi-public institutions that have a mandate for youth employment and skills development. Identify and analyze the quality of youth employment-related programs that these agencies, ministries, and institutions host (or know about or recommend) and the services those programs offer.
 - e) **Sector and Partner Events:** Industry and partner-led events that offer networking and recruitment opportunities, such as job fairs, skills showcase, and sector-specific forums, noting their accessibility for Project participants. For example, are these events designed to be inclusive and accessible to different groups of youth reached through the project (i.e. youth with disabilities, young women and men, youth who are migrants or refugees, etc.)

- 4) **Enhance the employment success of youth participants in the Pathways to Prosperity: Empowering Young Women for program by analyzing, assessing, and optimizing its existing job linkage strategy:** This involves an assessment of current job linkage activities to identify strengths and weaknesses, followed by the identification of additional, low-cost avenues, strategies, and activities. The final deliverable will be a set of actionable recommendations to both improve existing efforts and implement new, innovative and cost-effective interventions for job matching and placement.
- a) Provide actionable recommendations for our program's job matching and placement efforts. This should include specific guidance on how we can:
 - i) Optimize our program's networking and outreach to key training providers and employers.
 - ii) Improve the effectiveness of existing job linkage activities.
 - iii) Equip youth with the most effective job search skills for the local context and their individual needs and aspirations.
 - iv) Identify and leverage technology or platforms that effectively connect our youth with employers.

The study team will undertake consultation with the SC team at the commencement of the Project to further refine the study objectives and questions.

1.3 Key Study Questions

For this study, the consultant(s) should follow these questions as guidelines to develop the research and analysis strategy and to develop the study protocol.

Objective 1: Analyze Labor Market

- 1) What social, cultural, and structural factors hinder young women's ability to secure and retain employment opportunities?
- 2) Which three to five sectors (including traditional sectors, the Formal gig economy, and the informal market) in the target region(s) show the most significant demand and growth for entry-level workers For each area, what are the top entry-level occupations suitable for project youth?
- 3) What are the Vocational skills and the most valued life skills required for these entry-level jobs?
- 4) Based on an analysis of job posting data, what is the estimated monthly or quarterly volume of job openings for these entry-level positions? Are there any seasonal hiring trends or other cyclical patterns for these roles? Are there any discriminatory or inclusive practices in the sector or industry?
- 5) What is the typical quality of these entry-level jobs in terms of average wages/earnings, contract stability, and potential for career growth?
- 6) What are the most significant local barriers preventing different groups of youth with disabilities and ethnic from securing and retaining these jobs? This should include:
 - a) Systemic challenges that may affect all youth (e.g., lack of required credentials, high transportation costs, limited social networks).
 - b) Specific barriers (e.g., workplace safety, harassment, restrictive social norms, caregiving responsibilities, lack of safe and accessible transportation) that may disproportionately affect

young women from different groups (young women with disabilities, young women from ethnic minorities, etc.).

- c) Specific barriers for youth with disabilities (both apparent and non-apparent) (e.g., availability of reasonable accommodations across all phases of training , employment, culture of inclusion).
- d) Barriers faced by displaced youth.

Objective 2: Employment and entrepreneurship Ecosystem Mapping

- 7) **Employers:** Who are the key employers in the sectors identified that are actively hiring for these entry-level roles?
 - a) What is the best point of contact for partnership-building within these organizations (e.g., HR manager, talent acquisition specialist, hiring manager)?
 - b) For each of the identified employers, what is the estimated average number of entry-level hires they make per year?
 - c) What are the specific job titles and descriptions for the entry-level roles offered by these employers?
 - d) For each of the key employers, what are the most critical skills and qualifications they are looking for in new hires? How do these align with the skills taught in the "Skills to Succeed" program?
 - e) What are the employers' current strategies for sourcing entry-level talent, and are they open to partnering with a youth employment program? What are their key motivators or hesitations regarding such partnerships?
 - f) Do they actively recruit and/or have specific programs in place to attract and/or retain youth from underrepresented groups e.g. young women, youth with disabilities, youth from refugee communities, etc. How do they promote inclusion and accessibility of entry-level staff? For example, do they have partnerships with schools or organizations to facilitate recruitment of underrepresented groups; specific internship, mentorship, or peer support programs; human resources materials; staff with expertise in working with youth with disabilities, etc.?
- 8) **Employment Platforms & Organizations:** Which digital and physical platforms, organizations, or networks are most effective in connecting youth to the identified employment opportunities? (e.g., job boards, career centers, placement agencies).
- 9) **Government & Institutional Stakeholders:** Which government department or institutional stakeholders have a mandate for youth employment, and what are their key programs, priorities, or potential partnership opportunities? What is the quality and effectiveness of the programs most suitable for project participants?
 - a) Can these stakeholders recommend other platforms or organizations working in the youth employment space? Can they recommend employers that would be suitable partners for Skills to Succeed?
- 10) **Sector & Partner Events:** What are the key industries or partner-led events (job fairs, forums, skills showcase, etc.) that provide the best opportunities for networking and recruitment? Note those events that explicitly advertise or mention that they are accessible for or encourage people with disabilities to participate.

Objective 3: Enhance Job Linkage Strategy

- 11) Considering the Youth Employment Ecosystem Mapping (employers, platforms, etc.), what are the most effective and preferred channels for connecting youth with employment opportunities?

- 12) Based on a holistic analysis of the ecosystem, what are the top actionable strategies the project can implement to improve job matching and placement outcomes? This includes:
- How can the program optimize its networking and outreach to engage the priority stakeholders identified in the ecosystem map?
 - How can the program better leverage specific technologies or platforms to connect youth with and without disabilities to employers more efficiently?
 - How to best identify employers that provide safe, decent, accessible, and well-paying entry-level positions for different groups of youth in the project (i.e. young women and men, youth with disabilities etc.)?
 - Based on the findings of the research, what are the most effective job search skills (e.g., resume building, interview prep, online presence) the program should emphasize to align with local market expectations?

Which actors, platforms, and events in the ecosystem offer the highest potential impact (most efficient pathways to employment and self-employment) for the most feasible effort? (This question directly informs the collaborative "Now, Next, Later" prioritization workshop).

1.4 Scoping of Suitable Entry-level Roles for project Participants

To ensure the rapid labor market assessment is tailored to the program's participants, the study team should work closely with the Save the Children program staff at the outset of the Project on defining the characteristics in the below table. A suitable "entry-level" position is defined by several key characteristics. To ensure the labor market assessment is relevant, the consultant's first task is to develop a Framework of Participant Characteristics. This framework will capture the spectrum of the youth population and will serve as the primary analytical lens for the assessment.

The central goal is to identify roles that are viable for PROJECT youth, recognizing that participants have a diverse range of characteristics, skills, interests, and experience from their individual educational paths.

Step 1: Map the project Participant Landscape

Working with the Save the Children program team, the consultant will map the key characteristics across the target population. Instead of creating a single, average "profile," the goal is to understand the different segments or archetypes that exist within the cohort (e.g., 'Recent TVET Graduate in IT,' 'First-Time Job Seeker with a High School Diploma,' 'University Student seeking part-time work').

The table below outlines the core components for this framework. For each component, the consultant should define the typical range and identify any common groupings.

Demographic Background	The range of ages, gender distribution, disability statuses, and geographic locations of project youth (and where they commonly move to find jobs, if relevant).
Socioeconomic Context	Common socioeconomic strengths or barriers present across different segments of the participant population.
Experience Requirement	The spectrum of prior professional experience, from 0 year for first-time job seekers to 2 years for others, including internships and volunteer work.
Skill/Experience Alignment	A map of the skills and qualifications project youth possess across different archetypes. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core Program Skills: The foundational competencies all

	<p>participants receive from the project curriculum (e.g., life skills, growth mindset, AI, and digital skills).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Variable Educational Background: The range of technical knowledge and abilities participants possess from their various fields of study (e.g., healthcare, IT, business administration, etc.).
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Step 2: Identify and Assess Suitable Entry-Level Roles and Career Paths

Once the Framework of Participant Characteristics is established, the consultant will use it as a multi-faceted benchmark to assess the local labor market. The goal is to identify a portfolio of opportunities that cater to the different archetypes within the project population, focusing on long-term career pathways.

A “suitable” opportunity is defined by its strong alignment with one or more of the identified project participant segments. The consultant will look for roles that meet the following criteria:

- **Are Accessible:** The role’s requirements are a realistic match for the characteristics defined in the participant framework.
- **Align with Skills:** The job’s responsibilities align with the competencies present within specific project participant segments.
- **Offer Growth Potential (preferred but not required):** The entry-level role is a stepping stone with clear potential for advancement, skill development, and increasing earnings, making it a viable long-term path.

2. STUDY METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Data Collection Plan

The consultant will develop the research protocol, adapt the provided tools for qualitative data collection, implement the tools, and analyze the data. All primary data collected during the study must facilitate disaggregation by gender and disability, where available/feasible. Additionally, it is important to highlight that the implementation protocol as well as all tools related to data gathering should undergo and be approved by Save the Children’s Ethical Review Committee.

Quantitative Strategy

The quantitative strategy will primarily rely on secondary data to analyze labor market trends and the overall volume of opportunities for youth. The data sources outlined in the following section should be considered a foundational starting point; the list is not exhaustive, and the consultant is encouraged to identify and incorporate other relevant data sources to strengthen the analysis.

Labor Market Analysis (Limit to 10 pages in the Final Report):

Data Sources: The consultant will access and analyze publicly available data from national and regional government bodies, such as the Ministry of Labor, National Statistics Office, and Central Bank. The focus will be on reports detailing labor force participation, unemployment rates by age demographic, and sector-specific growth forecasts. Data from international organizations like the ILO or the World Bank will also be used to provide a broader economic context.

Data Points: The analysis will identify the top 3-5 sectors (including the gig economy and informal market) with high growth and demand for entry-level workers. All findings will be benchmarked against the project Participant Competency Framework to ensure relevance.

Job Posting Data Analysis:

Data Sources: The consultant will systematically collect and analyze data from popular local online job boards, company career pages, and professional networking platforms.

Data Points: The analysis will track the frequency of postings for target occupations to estimate the volume of opportunities and identify any cyclical, discriminatory/inclusive, or seasonal hiring patterns.

Ecosystem Actor Identification:

To supplement the desk research, the consultant should perform informal outreach to stakeholders to validate findings and use a snowball sampling method to identify additional actors.

Data Sources: The Labor Market and Job Posting Analysis will provide an initial list of employers. This list will then be expanded through targeted desk research to identify the other ecosystem actors:

- For additional Employers: Reviewing business directories and Chamber of Commerce member lists.
- For Employment Platforms & Organizations: Identifying key organizations by reviewing NGO/development partner reports and conducting targeted searches. The search must identify a mix of both digital and physical entities, such as online job boards, in-person career hubs, specialized employment agencies, and local organizations focused on youth employment or employment for persons with disabilities.
 - There are three lists globally that contain companies that are disability inclusive employers: 1: ILO Network ([Home | ILO Global Business and Disability Network](#)), Valuable 500 ([Companies - Valuable 500](#)), Disability:IN [2025 Disability Index Report - Disability:IN](#)). The study team will look for similar lists locally.
- For Government Stakeholders: Reviewing official government websites, ministry organization charts, and national youth and disability employment policies and programs.
- For Sector & Partner Events: Reviewing the event calendars of industry associations, university career centers, and major employers.

Data Points: For each potential employer, the consultant will collect data on their sector, relevant job titles, any public information regarding their size or hiring volume, and publicly available policies on DEI, gender or disability (parental/maternity/paternity leave policies, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) / Anti-Discrimination / Anti-harassment Policies, Equal Pay Policy). This will create a pre-vetted list for the qualitative research phase.

Qualitative Strategy

The qualitative strategy will focus exclusively on primary data collected through interviews with employer representatives. This approach is designed to gain in-depth, actionable insights directly from the employers' perspective, validating quantitative findings and providing the necessary context to develop targeted recommendations.

The study team is required to adhere to the [Save the Children Child Safeguarding; Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying](#); and Data Protection and Privacy policies throughout all Project activities.

2.2 Ethical Considerations

It is expected that this study will be:

- **Ethical:** The study must be guided by the following ethical considerations:
 - Safeguarding – demonstrating the highest standards of behavior towards children and adults.
 - Sensitive – to child rights, gender equality, inclusion, accessibility and cultural contexts.
 - Intersectionality – helps us understand how various systems of oppression (e.g. sexism, ableism, ageism, classism, etc.) can overlap, converge, and lead to unique experiences of discrimination and subjugation for specific groups (e.g. young women with disabilities, young men who are refugees, etc.). Wherever possible data should be disaggregated and analyzed using an intersectional approach.
 - Openness - of information given, to the highest possible degree to all involved parties.
 - Confidentiality and data protection - measures will be put in place to protect the identity of all participants and any other information that may put them or others at risk.¹
 - Public access - to the results when there are not special considerations against this
 - Broad participation - the relevant parties should be involved where possible.
 - Reliability and independence - the study should be conducted so that findings and conclusions are correct and trustworthy.

It is expected that:

- Data collection methods will be age, gender and disability (i.e., inclusive and accessible) sensitive. See Save the Children's [Gender and Power Analysis Guidance](#).
- Study activities will provide a safe, creative space where children feel that their thoughts and ideas are important.
- A risk assessment will be conducted that includes any risks related to children, young people's, or adult's participation.
- A referral mechanism will be in place in case any child safeguarding or protection issues arise.
- Informed consent and assent will be used as appropriate.

The study team will be required to obtain approval from Save the Children's Human Research Ethics Committee. Save the Children will provide assistance with this process.

3. EXPECTED TIMELINE & DELIVERABLES

The tentative timeline (subject to the commencement date of the study) and study deliverables are outlined below.

3.1 Study Timeline

Key deliverables in **bold**

What	Who is responsible	By when
Selection of consultant	Save the Children	March 2026
Develop research protocol and adapt tool	Study team	First week of April 2026
Desk Review and Quantitative Analysis	Study team	Second week of April 2026
Review of Research Protocol and Tools	Save the Children	Last week of April 2026
Ethics Submission (to SC IRB)	Save the Children	Last week of April 2026
Data Collection	Study team	Mid-May 2026
Draft Report	Study team	Last week of May 2026
Review of Draft Report	Save the Children	First week of June 2026
Final Report and Employer Mapping	Study team	Mid of June 2026

3.2 Deliverables

The study team will produce the following deliverables:

Deliverables	Timeline
<p>Research protocol and data collection tools which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Description of the Program and context relevant to the Study using the literature review and desk research. ▪ Study objectives, scope and key study questions. ▪ Description of the methodology, including design, data collection methods, sampling strategy, data sources, and outcome indicators to be measured. ▪ Data analysis and reporting plan ▪ Caveats and limitations of study ▪ Risks and mitigation plan ▪ Ethical considerations, including details on consent and data privacy. ▪ Adapted data collection tools (i.e., KII) 	Mid-April 2026

Draft potential training and trade list	Last week of May 2026
<p>Final Youth Employment Ecosystem Mapping</p> <p>The deliverable should be presented in two formats:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A dedicated section within the final report. 2. A standalone, editable slide deck (e.g., PowerPoint). This ensures the Save the Children team can easily use, present, and update the map as a living strategic tool. <p>Part A: The Ecosystem Map</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visual Ecosystem Map: A one-page diagram that visually represents the key stakeholders and illustrates any connections between them. This provides an overview of the landscape. 2. Detailed Stakeholder Profiles: A standardized profile for each key actor identified, organized by category. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. For Key Employers: Includes company name, sector, size, estimated number of annual entry-level hires, required skills, contact person/info, and a summary of KII findings (e.g., partnership interest, preferred engagement methods, etc.). b. For Other Stakeholders (Platforms, Government, Events): Includes organization/event name, type (e.g., online job board, government ministry, etc), scale/reach, key services offered, key sectors covered (if applicable), and a summary of their relevance to PROJECT youth. <p>Part B: The Prioritized Engagement Strategy: This section translates the map into an actionable plan, presenting the output from the Prioritization Workshop in a clear matrix format. A table that organizes the mapped stakeholders into the agreed-upon categories. This should include stakeholder name, type, prioritization category (Now, Next, Later), rationale for prioritization, recommended next steps.</p>	Last week of May 2026
<p>Final Rapid Labor Market Assessment Report including the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive summary ▪ Scope and focus of the study. ▪ Overview of the study methodology and data collection methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Specific caveats or methodological limitations ▪ Findings aligned to each of the key study questions. ▪ Youth Employment Ecosystem Mapping ▪ Conclusions outlining implications of the findings or learnings. ▪ Annexes ▪ <p>A consolidated set of feedback from key stakeholders will be provided by SC within two weeks of the submission of the draft report. The final report will incorporate feedback from SC. Final report should not be longer than 40 pages not including references, annexes and table of contents. The authors should use the Accessibility Checker and address any issues that</p>	Mid of June 2026

are raised by the checker. If assistance is required, SCUS can provide support.	
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All documents are to be produced in MS Word and PowerPoint format (must be accessible and will be checked using the MS Accessibility Checker in MS Word and PowerPoint) and provided electronically by email to SC. All deliverables must be approved by SC staff.

4. CONSULTANT PROFILE

Individual or Firm with:

- Proven experience designing and conducting labor market assessments and stakeholder/ecosystem mapping, utilizing mixed-methods (quantitative and qualitative).
- Subject matter expertise in youth livelihoods and employment.
- Demonstrated experience in conducting ethical, inclusive, and culturally sensitive studies with youth and vulnerable populations, adhering to child safeguarding principles.
- Demonstrated understanding of foundational areas including gender equality, disability inclusion and intersectional analysis.
- Experience managing and coordinating with a range of actors, including government agencies, private sector employers, and non-government organizations.
- Strong written and verbal skills in communicating complex findings to non-specialist audiences, evidenced by high-quality report writing and presentation skills.
- A track record of open, collaborative working with clients.
- Additional understanding of accessible communications (e.g., producing reports in accessible formats) is desired.

There is a high expectation that:

- ✓ A team leader will be appointed who has the seniority and experience in leading complex study Projects, and who has the ability and standing to lead a team toward a common goal.
- ✓ The team has the ability to commit to the terms of the Project and have adequate and skilled resources available to dedicate to this study over the period.
- ✓ The team has a strong track record of working flexibly to accommodate changes as the Project is implemented.

Applicants should propose a detailed budget, including:

- Personnel/staffing
- Field visits and data collection
- Analytical tools/software
- Report writing and dissemination
- Final selection will be based on technical strength and value for money.

5. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested **individual consultants** are requested to submit the following documents in the email address mentioned:

- **A Technical Proposal** including –
 - ✓ Brief understanding of the task.

- ✓ Descriptions in brief on the experiences of carrying out high-quality and credible completion of relevant tasks (proof required).
 - ✓ Brief on the methodologies for task completion.
 - ✓ Tentative schedule for completing the task.
 - ✓ Work references – contact details (e-mail addresses) of 2 referees (organizations by whom you were contracted for similar assignments).
 - ✓ CV and a Cover Letter.
 - ✓ NID copy, TIN Certificate, BIN Certificate and Acknowledgement copy of Income Tax Return for the most recent year.
 - **A Financial Proposal** including -
 - ✓ Detail breakdown of costs and consultancy fees (tax will be deducted as per government rules)
 - Email: shuvo.sarker@savethechildren.org
 - **Please only mention “Consultant for Gender-sensitive needs assessments” in the subject line of the email.**
 - Application closing date: **March 23, 2026.**
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