Responsible Tourism Framework

Transforming heritage tourism



SCOTLAND

HISTORIC | ÀRAINNEACHD ENVIRONMENT | EACHDRAIDHEIL ALBA

Warming Stripes - a visual representation of the change in global temperatures as measured over the past 100+ years. Each stripe represents one year, starting in the late 19th century (left) up until 2020 (right). The 'warmer' the stripe the higher the average recorded temperature was that year. (Source: <u>showyourstripes.info</u>) Front cover image: Holyrood Park

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

ADHBHARAN IS AN SGÒP

The Responsible Tourism Framework for Historic Environment Scotland (HES) defines our understanding of, and role in, responsible tourism. It outlines the principles guiding our organisation's decision-making and around which we can build actions going forward. It sets out how tourism in the historic environment can contribute to better quality of life and meaningful experiences for all, now, and for future generations.

Our Place in Time (OPIT), Scotland's strategy for the historic environment, has identified the historic environment as key to Scottish tourism, providing visitor attractions that represent Scotland's identity, and a significant contribution to our economy.

We recognise the need to transform our business model to reflect the principles of responsible tourism and make sure we fulfil the vision of OPiT and subsequent strategies for the historic environment.

Doing so is a priority for us, and our partners and stakeholders, to build a resilient future for the organisation and the heritage tourism sector as a whole. It also contributes to the achievement of our wider climate action ambitions and statutory duties, including the Scottish Government Net Zero target by 2045, and the transition to a wellbeing economy.



The framework supports the national tourism strategy, Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future, developed by the Scottish Tourism Alliance, with HES represented on the Strategy Steering Group. Addressing climate change and supporting the inclusive economic recovery of the tourism sector are central to the national strategy.

Our commitment is rooted in our <u>HES Corporate Plan</u> - <u>Heritage for All:</u>.

We will promote responsible tourism – working to make our historic sites outstanding attractions that tell Scotland's story, while respecting the needs of local communities, visitors, the environment, and our cultural heritage itself.

While we have previously referred to sustainable tourism in policy such as our <u>Climate Action Plan</u> <u>2020-2025 (CAP)</u>, our understanding in this fastchanging topic area has grown. As a result, we recognise the need for updated terminology and are now adopting a responsible tourism approach. With our evolving understanding and developments in this area, this document will change accordingly over time.

Appendix A shows how the framework connects to various HES internal policies.

Visiting Fort George

Responsible Tourism is a key part of our CAP, which sets out, across seven themes, how we will place the environmental impact of our activities at the heart of our decision-making and support others to do the same. As well as highlighting our approach to properties in care (PICs), this framework is relevant to the wider historic environment and our work with partners and other stakeholders.



The key areas for our climate change work.

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Relevance of the Responsible Tourism key priority areas to HES internal policies and action areas

Storytelling at Craigmillar Castle

WHY IS RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IMPORTANT?

CARSON A THA TURASACHD CHÙRAMACH CUDROMACH?

Tourism is a major component of our economy, providing employment and contributing to GDP and overall economic growth. There is growing global recognition of the importance of responsible tourism and its benefits, that can be enjoyed by all, both now and in the future, without detriment to communities and the environment. Collectively, and as individuals, we need to take responsibility for transforming tourism by mainstreaming environmental, social and economic sustainability in everything we do. Responsible tourism is guided by and forms part of various national policies and legislation.

The main guiding policies for us are:



The global climate emergency

Tourism contributes significantly to climate change through its associated greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, it is vulnerable to the changes in climate and subsequent negative impacts. <u>Climate action in tourism</u> needs to be accelerated following the declaration of a climate emergency by the Scottish Government and Visit Scotland. HES, identified as a 'Major Player' under the <u>Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009</u>, has a duty to act sustainably as an exemplar and contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.



The shift to a circular economy

The tourism industry is interlinked with the production and consumption of products and services, accounting for around 80% of Scotland's carbon footprint. Circular business models seek to keep products and materials in use for as long as possible, reducing waste and the negative impacts of resource extraction such as biodiversity loss. It can also help to create a more sustainable and resilient industry which offers competitive economic opportunities and greener jobs.



The transformation to **a wellbeing economy**

The tourism industry is a major contributor to the Scottish economy and its transformation. Scotland's wellbeing economy will be inclusive, promote sustainability, prosperity, and resilience, where businesses can thrive and innovate, supporting communities across the nation to access opportunities and enhance wellbeing.



The just transition to net zero

The tourism industry needs to change to support a successful transition to a net zero society by 2045. Tourism has significant potential and a responsibility to effect profound changes while ensuring that the benefits of a fairer, greener future can be enjoyed by all through a resilient economy delivering fairness and tackling inequality and injustice.



The **Place Principle**

The tourism industry, at its core, can enable communities to shape places where people, location and resources combine and create a sense of identity and purpose. A more joined-up, collaborative and participative approach with communities develop experiences that deliver positive benefits for all and foster understanding and respect. Responsible Tourism Framework

Beach clean board at Inchcolm Abbey

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM PRINCIPLES

PRIONNSABALAN NA TURASACHD CÙRAMAICH

Our responsible tourism approach is guided by five interlinking principles, which are adapted from those laid out in the **Cape Town Declaration 2002.**

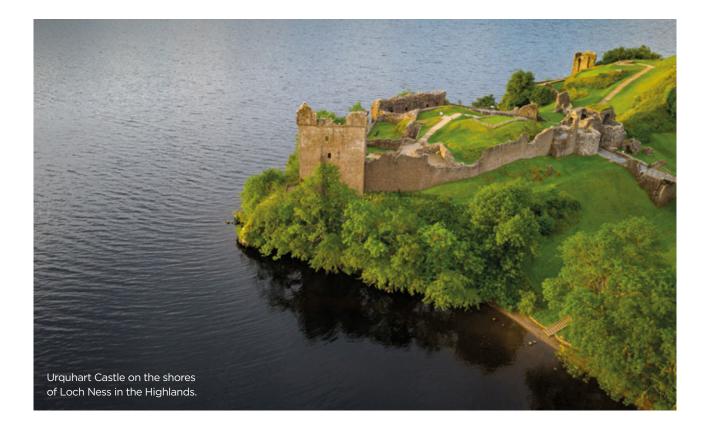


RESPONSIBLE TOURISM AT HES – OUR OBJECTIVES

TURASACHD CHÙRAMACH AIG HES – NA H-AMASAN AGAINN

As Scotland's lead public body for the historic environment and the largest operator of paid-for visitor attractions, we have a responsibility to show leadership in the just transition to a low carbon economy. Our objective is to turn the opportunities of a transition to net zero, and a responsible form of tourism, into reality.

Responsible Tourism is about making 'better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit' (Cape Town Declaration, 2002). We aim to provide our visitors with the facilities, infrastructure, and information they need to make their visit as sustainable and responsible as possible. We continue delivering increased economic and wellbeing benefits to the local communities which we are part of, maintaining a financially resilient organisation, as well as supporting the wider tourism sector.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM AT HES – OUR OBJECTIVES

We want to:

Build business resilience and decrease our dependency on a carbon and resource intensive operational model.

> Enable community wealth building through participation, inclusion, and sharing our knowledge, leading to greater economic benefits and wellbeing.

Respond to rapidly growing visitor expectation and demand for ethical, low carbon tourism experiences, alongside changing visitor behaviour, and numbers, due to climate change.



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Innovate creative ways to welcome visitors, and to communicate environmental stewardship, both physically and virtually.

Unlock local knowledge and narratives to enable enriching experiences and increase sense of place, cultural awareness, identity, and inclusion.

> Enhance wellbeing at the community and individual level, taking a more conscientious approach to the potential and value of place.

Crowds gathered for the Spectacular Jousting event at Linlithgow Palace. © Alastair Ross

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Responsible Tourism Framework

PRIORITY AREAS

RAOINTEAN PRÌOMHACHAIS

Guided by national policy and linking back to our responsible tourism principles, the following three priority areas are identified for effective action. Informed by extensive internal, cross-organisational consultation, nine outcomes and a series of aspirations are highlighted. These are not exhaustive, but form the starting point from which to develop the potential of our operational tourism activities. They cover the breadth of our responsibilities, as everyone has a part to play.

The priority areas and their leading principles are:

OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT:

This priority area covers aspirations to maximise our positive impact on the environment. This includes efforts to decarbonise our tourism operations, integrate circular business models, and sustainable procurement. It also covers our responsibility to enable and educate visitors to be responsible consumers.





This priority area covers aspirations to co-create experiences with wider communities and visitors. This includes encouraging meaningful interactions and improving access to our heritage for everyone, all with wellbeing at the heart of consideration.

OUR RESPONSIBLITY FOR CAPACITY BUILDING:

This priority area covers aspirations to use our lead position to support others. This includes demonstrating best-practice, providing guidance on responsible tourism, and strengthening skills development and local career pathways in the heritage tourism sector.



OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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AR N-UALLACH DHAN ÀRAINNEACHD EACHDRAIDHEIL

We will accelerate the transition to net zero-based circular business practices, capitalising on new opportunities through nature-based solutions, to reduce our dependency on a carbon and resource intensive operational model.

Herbs and plants for sale at Jedburgh Abbey.

We will integrate circular economy practices into our operational model.

We will protect and enhance the natural capital and biodiversity of our historic environment. We will enable and promote low carbon visitor experiences.

- Establish a supporting policy framework
- Embed resource efficiency and prioritise reused or remanufactured goods over new.
- Empower and invest in initiatives that help us eliminate waste and pollution and keep materials in use, both in the natural and built environments.
- Build strong and fair partnerships with our suppliers and mainstream sustainable procurement.

- Work in partnership with natural heritage organisations to deliver the objectives set out in the HES's Biodiversity Delivery Statement for the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.
- Holistically consider future resources required when planning new products and experiences, to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Promote and implement best practices avoiding or minimising negative impacts of our tourism activities on the environment.
- Increase engagement with communities and visitors on litter prevention and complete actions outlined in the HES Litter Prevention Action Plan.

- Design experiences and increase marketing for domestic and low carbon visitors.
- Embed sustainable and active travel as a core consideration in the development of strategies, such as the HES Monument Investment Plans and Sustainable Management Plans.
- Adopt a shared destination approach with partners to develop low carbon travel routes between attractions.
- Expand our capacity for digital interpretation of our heritage, enhancing our visitor welcome and experience.
- Mainstream the historic connection between us and our environment, the impact of the climate emergency on our sites, and what we are doing about it in our interpretation, communication, and our publications.



OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE

AR N-UALLACH DO DHAOINE

We will co-create memorable and innovative experiences with communities, enhancing wellbeing and making the historic environment accessible to more diverse groups of people, while fostering respect between visitors and residents.

Edinburgh's Muslim Scouts site visit to Stirling Castle. © Neil Hanna

We will co-create experiences enhancing the wellbeing of communities

and visitors.

We will improve physical, intellectual, cognitive and cultural accessibility to heritage tourism experiences for all. We will increase the seasonal and geographic spread of our outstanding experiences for more communities to benefit from tourism.

- Lead pro-active dialogues with communities, travel trade, Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), and tour operators to explore opportunities within social carrying capacity thresholds.
- Develop long-term relationships supporting groups who would otherwise struggle to engage actively with heritage and the historic environment.
- Develop a baseline to understand and recognise differing levels of community engagement.
- Evaluate feedback from communities, visitors, staff, and other stakeholders, on our co-creation and engagement with them.
- Develop colleagues to fully enable inclusive and meaningful community engagement around the development of our PICs.
- Encourage shared ownership of our heritage by providing authentic visitor experiences and volunteering opportunities that link to community priorities.

- Identify barriers relating to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion through collaborative research with visitors and partners, to ensure everything from planning and booking to experiencing Scotland's heritage is as accessible as possible.
- Build capacity to analyse and interpret all collected data, and develop experiences based on our improved understanding of our visitors gained from this data.
- Design inclusive experiences which attract, encourage and enable new audiences from all backgrounds and abilities to enjoy our heritage.
- Increase authentic engagement between staff and visitors to enhance accessibility.
- Support people on lowincomes, to overcome barriers to participation and active enjoyment of the historic environment.
- Support the Gaelic Interpretation review, enhancing accessibility of heritage to Gaelic communities and learners of the Gaelic language.

- Enhance our visitor offer to influence visitors to spend more time in one place, visit off-peak, and spread their visit across the country, and reduce pressure at high-volume sites.
- Adequately invest in pro-active visitor management, operations, staffing, and interpretation, to ensure quality experiences.
- Develop a visitor offer which is adaptable to external influences.



OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

AR N-UALLACH AIRSON FÀS A THOIRT AIR COMASACHD

We will lead the heritage tourism sector by using the organisation's strength and capabilities to support and enable other partners to adopt responsible tourism practices and thrive sustainably, and to provide career pathways, training, and green jobs.

DigiFest 2018 at the Engine Shed, Stirling. © Julie Howden



We will improve and support the generation of local economic benefits from tourism. We will strengthen the provision of skills development and quality career pathways in the heritage tourism sector. We will support heritage and tourism organisations and businesses in their efforts to move to business models reflecting responsible tourism principles.

- Facilitate community wealth building through regional economic planning and investment mechanisms reducing Economic Leakage.
- Increase HES's awareness of regional tourism strategies to identify areas for effective support and collaboration.
- Support and invest in communities to develop local approaches to tourism planning and management.
- Ensure marginalised communities and individuals are involved in decision-making processes, to support and encourage inclusive employment and entrepreneurship.

- Identify skills and knowledge gaps across the heritage tourism sector to develop tailored training resources.
- Strengthen partnerships with institutions training our future staff, to address knowledge and skills gaps, remain upto-date with research, and embed HES knowledge in their learning programmes.
- Identify our skills and knowledge gaps, and develop training in response.
- Develop a knowledge base and best practice catalogue, including examples of community co-creation, to ensure consistency across the organisation.
- Integrate pro-active workforce planning to ensure provision of training and progression opportunities.
- Support the development of Gaelic awareness courses in the tourism curriculum and information sessions for businesses in Gaelic communities.

- Expand relationships with community and volunteering groups, and local businesses, support them on climate action, and developing products and activities aligning with a responsible tourism approach.
- Collaborate with DMOs to support and influence destination aims.
- Share tailored guidance and insight on practical action towards net zero.
- Provide funding for a broad range of heritage assets owners, to further their activity towards net zero.
- Positively influence behaviour and inspire others within the heritage tourism sector towards taking responsibility for net zero activities.

Buttercups at Melrose Abbey

MEASURING PROGRESS

A' MEASADH ADHARTAIS

How will we know we're making progress? There will not be a 'one size fits all' answer to this, as our responsible tourism activity will look different across our operations, based on local circumstances, knowledge and capacities.

Rethinking success

Traditionally, tourism's success has been measured through financial indicators such as contribution to GDP, and visitor headcount. As we adopt responsible tourism principles, we recognise that commercial income and visitor numbers are a part of the bigger picture, and we need to consider other indicators and more qualitative measurements, such as our contribution to community wellbeing and satisfaction, and authenticity of place.

For the contributions to responsible tourism that are within our control, and building on the initial Responsible Tourism Assessment Framework which has been developed for Doune Castle, we can establish site specific baselines for aspects such as conservation, community, culture, and commerce, against which future performance can be measured. Strong partnerships and collaboration will be pivotal to drive, and support change beyond our immediate control, such as working with the transport sector and other stakeholders to reduce visitor emissions.

Governance

The publication of the Responsible Tourism Framework supports delivery of the aspirations for Sustainable Tourism set out in the HES Climate Action Plan. Progress towards the Framework's outcomes will be monitored by the Climate Action Plan Governance Board, which is chaired by our Chief Executive. Activity will be tracked and feed into our annual CAP Progress Report, Public Bodies Climate Change Duties report, HES Annual Report, and triennial Biodiversity Duty Report. Our responsible tourism activities will contribute to the delivery of a number of key performance indicators set in our Corporate Plan and Annual Operating Plan.



NEXT STEPS NA H-ATH CHEUMAN

This document sets out our aspirations for implementing responsible tourism principles across Historic Environment Scotland.

Transforming our activities around tourism to incorporate responsible tourism principles will be challenging for some areas of activity, but will also create new and exciting opportunities for us as a lead public body, as well as for the wider heritage tourism sector. It will require partnership working, transparency, and shared accountability for tourism in the historic environment, to ensure we are all empowered to participate in decision-making and acting responsibly. Responsibility for delivery of the aspirations outlined in this document lies with us all.

In a number of cases, a shift in existing internal policy is required, and we recognise that operational and cultural change will need to occur before some of these aspirations can be realised. Further mapping of the framework against existing policy is necessary, to identify areas where quick wins can be made, and where more work and resources are likely to be required for a successful transformation.

How this framework will be applied is likely to be different from site to site, across different communities, and different visitor types. Opportunities will be determined by site-specific factors, such that framework principles will be applied at local level, informed by site knowledge, and based on locally focused research.

The approach taken at individual sites can be aligned with existing prioritisation tools, such as the **OPIT Sustainable Investment Toolkit (SIT)**, developed by the OPIT Built Heritage Investment Group to demonstrate how a project or site contributes to positive outcomes for people across the wellbeing, climate and economic agendas. It will also form a component part of future activity, such as the HES PIC Strategy work.

The framework provides the basis for the next steps that can be taken to advance the efforts of implementing responsible tourism principles across HES.

Mainstreaming internal understanding of responsible tourism

Run facilitated workshops and on-site engagement with colleagues, focused on adopting responsible tourism principles into our operations, empowering managers and site staff to make local decisions and champion on the ground solutions. Initial progress can be made by extending the existing internal HES online course, <u>Climate Change and Heritage</u>.

Case studies

Document case studies to demonstrate practical examples of how responsible tourism in the historic environment can contribute to Scotland's economic recovery and net zero transition. Showcasing HES's leadership, these best-practice examples would be plugged into the <u>VisitScotland Responsible Tourism</u> <u>Case Study platform.</u>



Research

It is recognised that our knowledge and expertise in responsible tourism will evolve over time. We need to increase our understanding of our operational impact on communities and local economies, in parallel with new types of engagement with communities, visitors and stakeholders. We also need to gain greater awareness of the impact of climate change on tourism and the wider socio-economic impacts this will have on communities.

Resources

Identify areas for investment and upskilling and training staff to reflect a trajectory based on responsible tourism principles. Establish resource needs for funding transformative approaches and on the ground actions, including costs for coordination and monitoring.

External influence and profile

Strengthen our role as lead public body through existing and new external partnerships, for example using OPiT as a mechanism for wider sector engagement on Responsible Tourism.



Our Responsible Tourism work will follow existing and developing Scottish Government best practice guidance on achieving societal and environmental outcomes, for example the Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocol, the National Standards for Community Engagement and the Service-Design approach.

A new pedestrian bridge, built to link Doune Castle with its natural environment and improve links with the local village. © Rob McDougall

GLOSSARY BRIATHRACHAN

Accessibility: Providing for individuals with varied capabilities the opportunity to reach, participate, or understand.

Active travel: Making journeys by physically active means, such as walking or cycling, resulting in benefits to health, wellbeing, and the environment.

Adaptation: Measures such as physical interventions or changes in business practice implemented in response to, or in anticipation of, changes in climate to increase resilience.

Built environment: Human-made interventions in the environment including structures and facilities.

Capacity building: The process of developing the skills and capability to effectively address and strengthen our response to the causes and impacts of climate change.

Circular Economy: Part of the solution to our global climate emergency where products, services and systems are designed to maximise their value and minimise waste

Climate change: Future and recent changes in the climate that physically impact on sites, our operations and visitation.

Climate Justice: A human-rights based approach to tackling the climate crisis, recognising that marginalised communities are more vulnerable due to social and economic inequalities.

Cognitive accessibility: In this context refers to catering to needs of visitors with cognitive disabilities, such as Dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Community wealth building: Economic development which seeks to develop resilient, inclusive local economies, with more local employment and a larger and more diverse business base.

Cultural heritage: The legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that

are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.

Economic benefit: Any benefit(s) that can be quantified in terms of money generated (or saved), such as net income, revenues, etc.

Economic leakage: Economic leakage in tourism is where revenue generated leaves the local economy or community to benefit others.

Historic environment: Our surroundings as they have been shaped, used and valued by people in the past, and continue to be today. The historic environment includes natural and built features comprising our collective heritage, and it can be valued for both its tangible and intangible aspects, including the Gaelic language, traditions and folklore.

Intellectual accessibility: In this context refers to catering to needs of visitors with intellectual disabilities, such as Down Syndrome and Autism.

Just Transition: The process and outcome undertaken to deliver a net zero and climate resilient economy in a way that ensures fairness and tackles inequality and injustice.

Mitigation: In the context of climate change, efforts to decrease the amount of emissions released into the atmosphere and reduce the current concentration of greenhouse gases.

Natural capital: The elements of nature that produce value (directly and indirectly) to people, such as the stock of forests, rivers, land, minerals, and oceans. It includes living aspects (such as fish stocks) as well as non-living aspects (such as minerals and energy resources).

Natural heritage: Natural features and areas that constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants and natural sites of value from the point of view of science, conservation, or natural beauty. Nature-based solutions: Actions that use nature to address societal challenges, providing benefits for both human well-being and biodiversity.

Net Zero: The balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions emitted and the amount removed from the atmosphere. This differs from zero carbon emissions, which requires no carbon to be emitted.

Responsible/sustainable consumption: A concerted effort to purchase and use goods and services that have a low environmental footprint and provide a positive economic impact where possible.

Service Design: Improvement of existing services and innovation of new ones by the application of established design process and skills to focus on services which are useful, usable, efficient, effective, and desirable.

Shared destination approach: Development, commonly in partnership, of routes or itineraries that encourage visiting multiple sites in a responsible way. Examples include the 4 Abbeys Cycle route, and sections of the John Muir Way along the Antonine Wall.

Social carrying capacity: The maximum level of use that can be absorbed by an area without an unacceptable decline in the quality of experience for visitors and without unacceptable adverse impacts on society.

Sustainability: Using resources in an environmentally responsible, socially fair and economically viable manner, in order to meet the needs of current users without compromising the needs of future generations.

Visitors: In reference to our sites, visitors are people who come to our sites, but also can be people coming into undefined geographical areas.

APPENDIX A -

EÀRR-RÀDH A

Relevance of the Responsible Tourism priority areas to HES internal policies and action areas.

	We will accelerate the transition to net zero-based circular business solutions, capitalising on new opportunities through nature-based solutions, to reduce our dependency on a carbon and resource intensive operational model.	We will co-create memorable and innovative experiences with communities, enhancing wellbeing and making the historic environment accessible to more diverse groups of people, while fostering respect between visitors and residents.	We will lead the heritage tourism sector by using the organisation's strength and capabilities to support and enable other partners to adopt responsible tourism practices and thrive sustainably, and to provide career pathways, training, and green jobs.
Climate Action Plan 2020-2025	x		
Visitor Strategy 2019-2023	x	x	
Research Strategy 2022-2028	x	x	×
Equalities Outcomes and Mainstreaming		x	×
Communities Connections Programme	×	×	×
Skills Investment Plan 2019-2022		×	×
HES Volunteer Programme		×	×
Procurement Strategy 2022- 2026	x		x
Retail Strategy 2022-2027	x		
People Strategy 2020-2025		×	×
HES Our Behaviours		x	×
Gaelic Language Plan 2018-2023		x	x

Geotourist App in use in Holyrood Park, telling visitors about the park's rich stories, prehistoric tales and abundant wildlife.

Historic Environment Scotland is the lead public body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment.

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