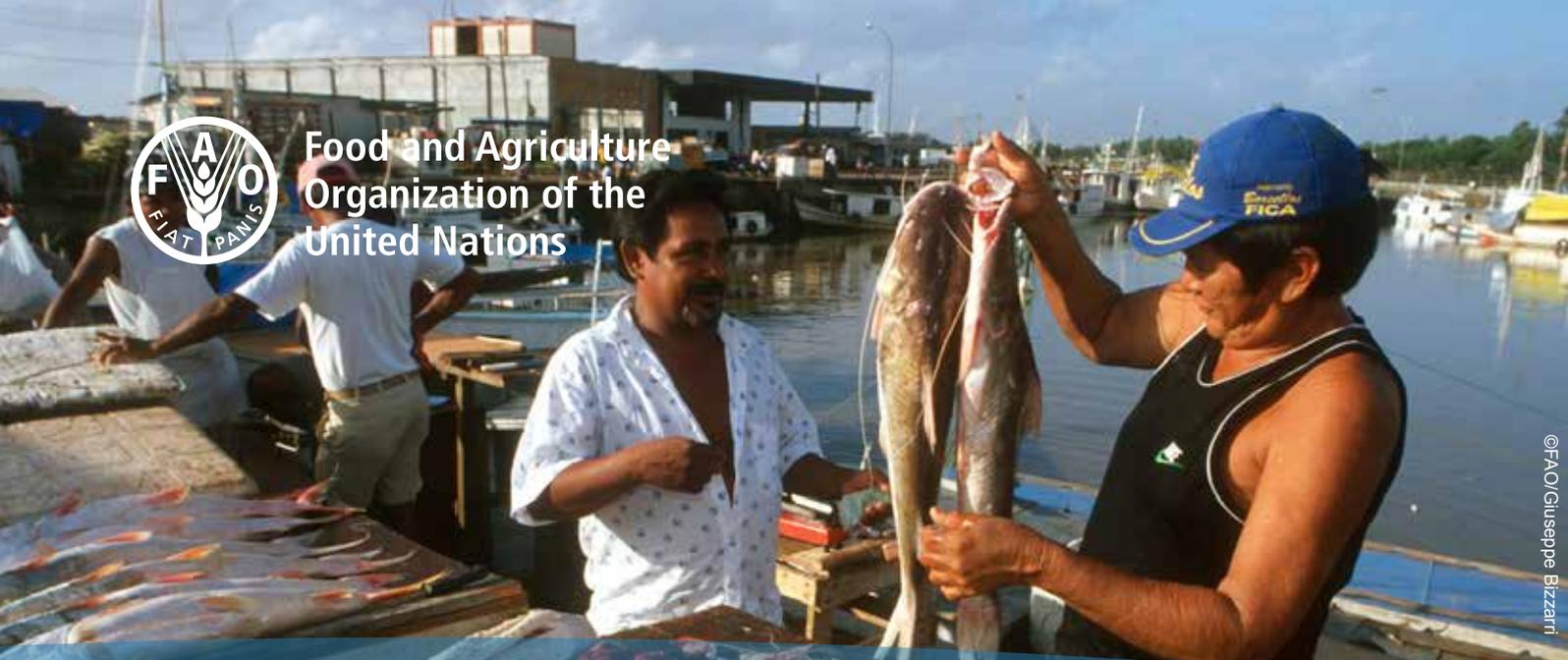


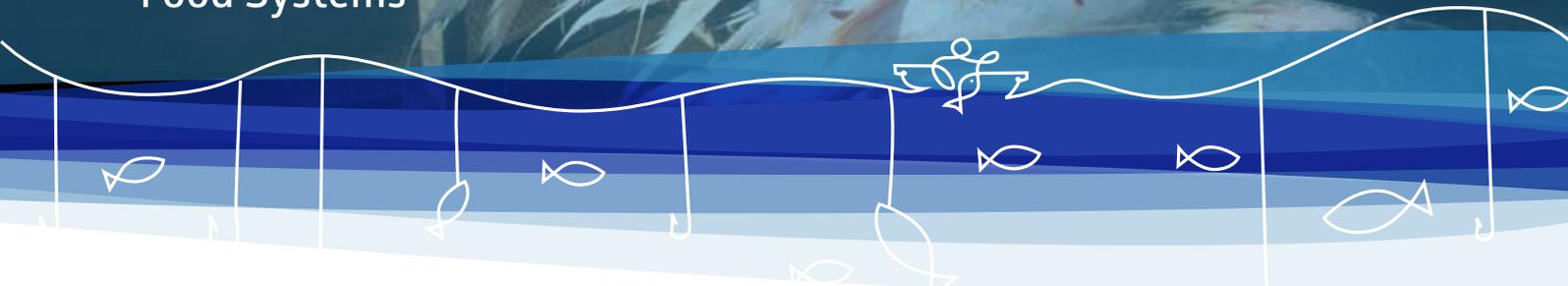


Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



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Linkages between the  
**Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries**  
in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication  
and the  
**Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and  
Food Systems**



## Making a difference in food security and nutrition, together

The small-scale fisheries sector employs more than 90 percent of the world's capture fishers and fish workers. Its contribution to global food security is clear, as over half the catch in developing countries originates from small-scale fisheries (World Bank, 2012).

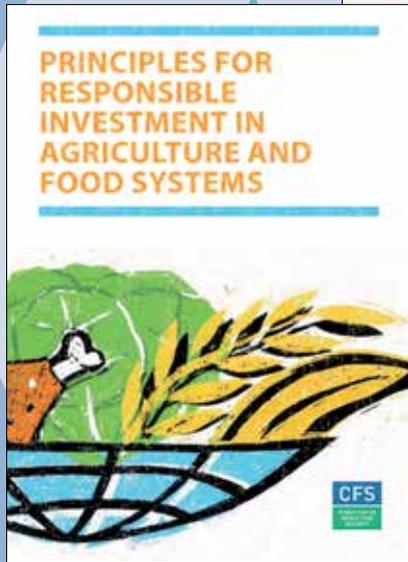
Despite their important role, small-scale fishers and fish workers remain marginalized and vulnerable.

They generally lack access to public services, appropriate infrastructures and financial services, and they do not have adequate access to markets. In addition, they suffer from insecure tenure rights to the resources that form the basis of their livelihoods, and are vulnerable to climate change and declining fish stocks.

- Sustainably enhancing financial capacity in and for the small-scale fisheries sector is important to allow the sector to better contribute to food security and poverty reduction. Enhancing responsible investments in agriculture and food systems, including in small-scale fisheries, is the collective responsibility of all stakeholders such as government institutions, small-scale fisheries actors, and the corporate private sector (CFS, 2014).
- Two international instruments provide guidance on how to better link responsible investments and the need to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication:



The Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI Principles).



- The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).

Both built on existing human rights obligations under international law

Both aim at the progressive realization of the right to adequate food

Non-binding documents

Global in scope

Focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups

To be implemented following a human-rights-based approach (HRBA)

Tools to guide dialogue, policy processes, and action at all levels, from local communities to global fora

### SSF Guidelines

- Endorsed at the 31st Session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in June 2014.
- Result of a bottom up participatory process that directly involved more than 4 000 participants from more than 120 countries.
- First international instrument entirely dedicated to a sub-sector: small-scale fisheries.
- Intended to support the visibility, recognition and enhancement of the role of small-scale fisheries in global and national efforts towards the eradication of hunger and poverty.
- Emphasize the needs of developing countries and advocates for the benefit of vulnerable and marginalized groups, empowering both men and women to claim and enjoy their rights.
- Promote decent work, with a focus on providing and enabling access to schools and education facilities that facilitate gainful and decent employment of youth.

### CFS-RAI Principles

- Endorsed at the 41st Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in October 2014.
- Result of global multi-stakeholder consultation processes which included governments, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and financial institutions among others.
- Most comprehensive international guidance instrument for agricultural investments.
- Promote responsible investment in agriculture and food systems with the ultimate purpose of contributing to food security and nutrition and eradicating poverty.
- Emphasis on smallholders and their organizations.
- Foster decent work, and specifically encourage states to provide appropriate training, education and mentorship programmes for youth to increase their capacity and/or access to decent work and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Promote sustainable and inclusive economic development.

The CFS-RAI Principles promote investments that contribute to food security and nutrition. They are relevant for all types of investments including productive assets, but also for investments in human capital or intangible capital (CFS, 2014). Thus, they provide a different approach to the concept of investment; one that is closer to the concept of integral human development. Similarly, the SSF Guidelines

go beyond fisheries and also address socio-economic issues of relevance to securing sustainable small-scale fisheries. Such a perspective requires bigger emphasis on respecting, protecting and promoting human rights by all relevant stakeholders, with a particular emphasis on strengthening the capacity of the most vulnerable and on addressing power imbalances through increased participation in decision-making processes.



## Small-scale fisheries and responsible investments: a path towards sustainable fisheries

An increase in capital flows and investments in small-scale fisheries can trigger many improvements: for example, the adoption of better practices and techniques for sustainable fishing operations, including the reduction of post-harvest losses; safer and more efficient post-harvest practices for more nutritious and valuable products; and better adaptation to climate change. It can also lead to a fairer distribution of benefits along the value chain for small-scale fishers. However, these investments must be responsible, and follow rigorous due diligence and meaningful consultations with all interested parties where the needs of and trade-offs for communities, fishers and fish workers are addressed.

The following section illustrates areas and issues in which the integrated application of the CFS-RAI Principles and the SSF Guidelines by all key stakeholders - in particular governments, small-scale fisheries actors and the private sector, but also other development partners and investors - can make a difference.

As called for in Paragraphs 32 to 36 of the CFS-RAI Principles, governments should create an enabling environment to support responsible investments in the sector, fulfilling the state's obligation to respect human rights (United Nations, 2011) by supporting the development of institutional and human capacity necessary, particularly of small-scale producers. This includes better access to education, including financial education, for small-scale fishing communities, fair access to markets, public services and inputs and technologies, and transparent and inclusive business models and partnerships (FAO, 2012a). For their part, the SSF Guidelines provide that states should support the development and access for small-scale fishing communities to different services such as education, savings, credits and insurance schemes, paying special attention to women (chapters 6, 7 and 8).

- In some cases, governments invest or allow investments in other sectors that have a direct impact on small-scale fishers. An example of this is the displacement of small-scale fishing communities when coastal space is allocated to other sectors such as tourism, energy or industrial fisheries, without proper consultation and to the detriment of those communities. Therefore, states should have clearly established rules and regulations that require them to carry out ex-ante independent impact evaluations of the investments and to ensure effective participatory consultations prior to the implementation of any large-scale project that has an impact on small-scale fishing communities as called for in Principles 9 and 10 of the CFS-RAI Principles and Paragraph 5.10 of the SSF Guidelines, including in relation to the tenure rights of small-scale fishing communities (FAO, 2012b). The matter of tenure rights is in fact essential in both instruments. Responsible investments should respect legitimate tenure rights to land, fisheries and forests, which are essential to protect small-scale fishing communities and to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. The tenure rights concept in fisheries means that small-scale fishers and fish workers need secure access to the resources they depend on, both fishery resources and land.<sup>1</sup> Principle No. 5 of the CFS-RAI Principles, "Respect tenure of land, fisheries and forests and access to water", refers specifically to the SSF Guidelines.

- Governments also, promote investments in developments that are aimed at improving livelihoods or economic performance. Such investments may be related to increasing agricultural efficiency or resilience (e.g. irrigation and intensification or drainage of wetlands for agriculture), securing water supplies or hydropower and flood proofing. The investments are intended to benefit society as a whole or sections of the rural or urban populations. However, as they greatly modify the hydrology and function of rivers,

<sup>1</sup> The respect of legitimate tenure rights to land, fisheries, and forest should also be in line with the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (VGGT), in particular to Chapter 12 "Investments".

floodplains and wetlands, they invariably have an impact on wild capture fisheries. The hydrological changes interrupt water connectivity, change water storage capacity and modify the quantity, quality and timing of flow, all of which have adverse impacts on fish as it hinders their ability to feed, grow and disperse. This will typically result in negative impacts on communities that are wholly or partially dependent upon small-scale fisheries, particularly inland small-scale fishers and their tenure rights to fishery resources, as they are a far smaller group than the broader population the investment is intended to benefit. It is essential, therefore, that appropriate mitigation is put in place when embarking on these investments. Governments should ensure that natural hydrology is minimally disrupted, and that water management and engineering of control structures are adapted to support this. Additional measures include protection of critical habitats and migration routes. Such mitigation actions need to be informed by competent environmental and social impact assessments to ensure that the livelihood and food security of small-scale fishers and their communities are minimally disrupted (McCartney, Funge-Smith and Kura, 2018).

On the other hand, small-scale fishers and fish workers are the major investors in their own activities to improve harvest and post-harvest operations. Access to responsible financial services is important to reduce the risk of financial dependency and debt bondage from other value chain players, for example. However, sector-internal investments can also carry risks for the small-scale fisheries sector. For example, in the absence

- of good management systems, investments in better equipment and more powerful boats can contribute to overfishing.

- Therefore, it is particularly important that their capacity to invest in an environmentally, economically and socially sound manner – and to benefit equitably from these investments – is strengthened and institutionalized. This should apply equally to all, including women, men and youth.

- The other relevant stakeholder group is the private sector, which can be key to providing capital, including so-called “impact investments”, and potentially generating various benefits for small-scale fisheries, such as higher productivity, employment creation and increased access to capital and markets, among others (FAO, 2017a). However, private sector investments in small-scale fisheries must be socially equitable and environmentally sustainable. Safeguards must be developed and applied, with clear rules so that an investor cannot retrieve the investment and abandon a community if the sector does not produce the expected benefits, for example. The private sector should act with due diligence, including in relation to human rights, respecting legitimate tenure rights (including customary rights) and using inclusive business models that benefit local populations. Good governance principles, including transparency and accountability, should guide investments mechanisms.

## Promoting the complementary implementation of the CFS-RAI Principles and the SSF Guidelines.

The following areas provide major opportunities for synergistic implementation of the two instruments.

### Women’s empowerment

Women comprise almost half the total workforce in the small-scale fisheries sector. They perform tasks along the entire value chain, in particular in the postharvest sector but also in pre-harvesting activities such as collecting and preparing bait, mending nets, fishing from boats or gleaning in near-shore areas. Women represent the dominant working force in selling, trading and processing fish (FAO, 2019).

Notwithstanding their crucial contribution to small-scale fisheries, women are one of the most vulnerable groups within the sector, suffering from underpayment, underrepresentation and under-participation in decision making. Responsible investments that particularly target women and their

- activities are crucial for women’s empowerment, to allow them to build resilience, and to give them the tools to overcome cultural asymmetries that in the long run will allow communities to overcome hunger and poverty. Both CFS-RAI Principle 3 and chapter 8 of the SSF Guidelines address gender equality and propose various strands of action at different levels while including all stakeholders. Approaches, which must be different depending on particular cultural contexts, situations, needs and constraints, must ultimately aim at eliminating all kinds of discrimination in accordance with international human rights laws such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

## EXAMPLE

### Investing in the FAO-Thiaroye fish processing technology (FTT – Thiaroye oven) – fish smoking and drying oven technology

Smoking is a traditional method of preserving fish. It is a small-scale post-harvest activity carried out primarily by women. The Thiaroye is an improved oven that allows for fish to be smoked in a healthier, more economical and sustainable manner than traditional smoking techniques. Investment in the Thiaroye ovens technology addresses gender equality in the small-scale fisheries sector, as it enables women to better manage their lives in safer and healthier surroundings. It also increases the time women have for other activities by reducing the smoking time from twelve to six hours (FAO, 2017b).



## Access to markets

As a perishable commodity, fish requires easy and reliable access to markets. Good market facilities that have ice, refrigeration and storage areas, and that also have basic services and infrastructure such as transport, electricity and roads, greatly reduce post-harvest loss and waste (FAO, 2017a).

As small-scale fishing communities tend to be located in remote and isolated areas, they often lack adequate, easy and reliable access to markets. This hampers the development of related post-harvest activities, which are usually an important source of employment, especially for women. Equally, access to markets is essential to provide food and nutrition security for communities and developing countries in general. More than half the fish (56 percent) sold in developing countries in 2010 was fresh fish (FAO, 2012c).

- Responsible investment is that which enhances the fairness, transparency, efficiency, and functioning of markets, in particular taking into account the interests of smallholders (CFS-RAI Principle 1). States have a key role in enabling, supporting and complementing investments by smallholders, and empowering them to invest responsibly, through encouraging market access and participation by smallholders by simplifying administrative procedures and striving to prevent unfair practices (Paragraph 39 CFS-RAI Principles). They should foster, provide and enable investments in appropriate infrastructure, organizational structures and capacity development to support small-scale fisheries' post-harvest subsector in a responsible and sustainable manner (Paragraph 7.3 SSF Guidelines). Furthermore, SDG target 14.b aims to "provide access for small-scale fishers to marine resources and markets".

## EXAMPLE

### Anova Food - fair trade initiative in Indonesia

Anova Food, a leading importer of sushi-quality frozen tuna products in North America, source their fish from Indonesian hand line tuna fisheries. In 2013, Anova partnered with Fair Trade USA to implement the first fair trade standard for wild-capture fisheries. It began field-testing the standard with 100 fishers who achieved certification in 2014. Since then, the programme has grown to 31 fishing communities across Eastern Indonesia, with over 800 small-scale fishers in 38 associations registered as Fair Trade Certified.

The Fair-Trade Capture Fisheries Standard aims to help fishers to effectively negotiate and commercialize their products, achieve income stability, have better work standards in their practices including health and safety measures and to adopt responsible fishing practices to protect fishing resources and biodiversity (Fair Trade USA, 2018).

For every kilogram of product sold under fair trade terms, Anova pays an additional premium back to the fishing community. As of December 2018, sales of the product had enabled fishers to earn USD 418 000 on top of the price paid for their catch. The funds have been used by the community for various social and environmental activities such as: educational projects, improving landing sites and gear, training on post-harvest handling to improve product quality, and environmental sustainability projects, among others. The model has enabled more equitable distribution of benefits throughout the supply chain and supports equitable access to markets where demand for responsibly sourced seafood is increasing (Zelasney, Bing Zheng, Edwards and Packer, 2019).

## Respecting cultural heritage

Respect for cultures is one of the central issues for small-scale fisheries. Often, the particular characteristics of a given small-scale fishing community's culture are the result of many lessons learned through extensive accumulated adaptive experience (McGoodwin J.R., 2001). These experiences make them real experts in matters of fisheries management and other related activities. Therefore, recognizing and respecting existing forms of organization, fishing methods and traditional local knowledge, including of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, is essential for supporting their role in the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

Respect for cultural heritage should also be an integral part of responsible investments. Promotion of innovative techniques should be respectful of the knowledge, culture, traditions and practices of small-scale fishing communities. The coexistence of traditional knowledge and innovative developments can be greatly beneficial as long as the introduction of the new does not threaten the continuity of cultural

- inherited practices, which are among the cohesive elements that allow small-scale fisheries to survive.

- Both the CFS-RAI Principles and the SSF Guidelines advocate for respect of cultures and traditional knowledge. One of the guiding principles in chapter 3 of the SSF Guidelines is the respect of cultures “recognizing and respecting existing forms of organization, traditional and local knowledge and practices of small-scale fishing communities...”. Principle 7 of the CFS-RAI Principles refers specifically to “respect cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, and support diversity and innovation”. In addition, the SSF Guidelines call for states and other relevant parties to provide support to small-scale fishing communities, in particular to indigenous peoples, women and those that rely on fishing for subsistence, and to provide the technical and financial assistance to organize, maintain, exchange and improve traditional knowledge of aquatic living resources and fishing techniques, and upgrade knowledge on aquatic systems (paragraph. 11.7).

### EXAMPLE

### Saving ancestral Danish clinker-built fishing vessels

The district of Han Herred in Denmark has witnessed for many generations a very unique form of traditional small-scale fishing with clinker-built boats using low-impact gear and fishing methods. However, the survival of this traditional fishing practice is currently threatened due to lack of investment.

In 2007, an association called the Han Herred Havbåde was created to restore and promote the use of these boats. They have currently launched a donation campaign to construct ten of these small-scale fishing boats combined with newer technology. Once the construction process finishes, boats are to be leased to members of small-scale fishing communities, who, after a 15-year long period, will become their legal owners. At the same time, the leasing payments of the initial boats will cover the construction of more boats (Euronews, 2019). This project is an example of protecting the traditional knowledge while at the same time supporting innovation in line with the SSF Guidelines and the CFS-RAI Principles.

# ACTION POINTS

## For governments

- Conduct regulatory, legal and institutional assessments against the provisions of both the CFS-RAI Principles and the SSF Guidelines and address identified gaps through amendments and reforms as needed.
- Guarantee that investments do not impact negatively on small-scale fishing communities, especially on their tenure rights and right to livelihood.
- Facilitate access for small-scale fishers to financial services.

## For private sector/donors/investment institutions

- Design and implement responsible investment and inclusive business models with appropriate safeguards, giving particular attention to women and their empowerment.
- Conduct effective due diligence impact assessments ahead of investments to avoid infringing on human rights.
- Conduct meaningful consultations with small-scale fishing communities to contribute to the success of the responsible investment.
- Ensure that investments protect and respect indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge and rights.

## For small-scale fisheries actors and their supporters (non-governmental organizations and others)

- Conduct trainings on the CFS-RAI Principles and the SSF Guidelines with small-scale fisheries actors and with small-scale fishing communities to promote their empowerment.
- Participate in policy, programmes and monitoring processes.
- Strengthen small-scale fishing communities as economic actors and develop the capacity to invest responsibly, particularly for women and youth.
- Document impacts of investments in small-scale fishers and derive good practices – share success stories!
- Promote inclusive business models in small-scale fishing communities and monitor their implementation.
- Create networks, participate in dialogues about responsible investments and engage effectively in the investment process (FAO, 2017a).

## For all

- Spread the word, inform, share experiences and generate consensus and public support on the importance of the CFS-RAI Principles and the SSF Guidelines.
- Try to consume (fish) products that come from responsible fisheries.
- Raise awareness at relevant events such as:
  - 2021 Global Summit on Food Systems
  - 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture
  - UN Decade on Family Farming 2019-2028
  - Annual sessions of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

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## LEARN MORE

The SSF Guidelines: <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/I4356EN>

The RAI principles: [www.fao.org/3/a-au866e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-au866e.pdf)

Guidelines for micro-finance and credit services in support of small-scale fisheries in Asia:  
[www.fao.org/3/ca5128en/CA5128EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca5128en/CA5128EN.pdf)

Guidelines for increasing access of small-scale fisheries to insurance services in Asia:  
[www.fao.org/3/ca5129en/ca5129en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca5129en/ca5129en.pdf)

Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition. A report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE): [www.fao.org/3/a-i3844e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3844e.pdf)

Value chains, post-harvest and trade in the SSF Guidelines:  
[www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/guidelines/trade](http://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/guidelines/trade)

The Committee of World Food Security: [www.fao.org/cfs](http://www.fao.org/cfs)

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