



RURAL SYNERGIES



AFRICA

*Building bridges between social and
productive inclusion policies*



With the technical support of:

Strengthening coherence between social protection and productive interventions in four African countries

KEY MESSAGES

Coordination between social protection programmes and productive rural development can help poor and vulnerable households overcome the poverty trap and break its intergenerational transmission. This is demonstrated by four studies carried out in Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mali, and Zambia. Although these are studies carried out before the socioeconomic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the results are promising in terms of their contribution to increasing the resilience of households in the face of shocks or external crisis, an argument that is particularly relevant to promote this kind of strategies given the strong need to promote processes of social and economic reactivation in the rural sector.

The impact evaluation of articulation cases in Africa, in general, show positive effects of the interaction between the analysed programs on productive variables – livestock production, crop production, average herd size, crop diversification, consumption and access to markets.

Some cases also showed positive effects on food security –Lesotho, Mali, and Zambia-, as well as on income and poverty –Lesotho and Zambia.

The institutional analysis concluded the importance of four aspects to achieve an enabling environment for social protection and rural productive interventions: i) political commitment, ii) coordination mechanisms, iii) funding mechanisms, and iv) human and physical resources.

Political commitment is necessary, but it is not sufficient to ensure articulation between interventions. It is needed to

complement political commitment with adequate technical conditions that make articulation possible.

The need for formal coordination mechanisms is evident throughout the public policy cycle and at all levels of implementation. Some of the cases analysed have coordination and collaboration mechanisms, mainly in the design and planning phases. However, in the implementation phases, collaboration and coordination are diluted.

The institutional analysis found that formal articulation mechanisms are more common at the central level, while at the local level, articulation occurred informally. However, in some cases –Ethiopia and Lesotho-, the local informal mechanisms managed to solve problems in the territory, guaranteeing the implementation of actions.

The case of Lesotho showed that targeting could be a key instrument to coordinate social protection and productive rural development programmes.

The analysis showed the need to pool resources to implement joint programmes. Additionally, budgetary aspects could be a key instrument to articulate interventions, especially when the actors involved have different views, and articulation is seen as a cost.

Finally, the study cases found a need to have enough human support in all levels of implementation. This human resource has to be trained in the importance of multisectoral interventions.



Why is the articulation between social protection and rural development necessary?

The link between social protection and productive rural development contributes to increasing the capacity of poor and vulnerable households to break the cycle of disadvantage and to prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty. While social protection provides liquidity and alleviates, in part, the conditions of poverty, productive development programs allow generating the means for a sustained exit from poverty.

Articulated strategies of this type are particularly relevant in rural areas of Africa, where the highest number of people and households are concentrated in conditions of poverty and where opportunities to generate income through access to paid employment are scarce. At the same time, a high degree of informality prevails in land tenure, trade, and income-generating activities in general, as well as low association and organisation among producers. Therefore, smallholder households are subject to external risks and impacts, showing low resilience to these shocks, and facing difficulties in accessing markets with their products, which do not always work correctly or do not exist at all. The result is that smallholder households living in poverty tend to take low-risk, low-return strategies as livelihoods, affecting their income-generating potential and consequent food consumption. These conditions, in turn, affect decisions regarding education and health, which lose priority over work and food, which usually results in the intergenerational transmission of poverty and vulnerability.

A strategy that addresses these different problems in an integrated way, providing immediate liquidity; promoting the participation of households in the health and education systems; generating capacities to unleash the productive potential of poor households; and supporting households with assets and inputs for the production and commercialisation of products, is an excellent strategy to move towards a sustained way out from poverty.

THE CASES: ETHIOPIA, LESOTHO, MALI, AND ZAMBIA

In **Ethiopia**, the case of study meant to assess the coherence between social protection, health and nutrition services, and agriculture. For this, the institutional analysis assessed the linked implementation of the **Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)**, and the **Improved Nutrition through Integrated Basic Social Services with Social Cash Transfer (IN-SCT) pilot**. Further, a quantitative evaluation was conducted to assess the impacts of PSNP + IN-SCT on productive outcomes.

The case of **Lesotho** was based on an institutional analysis of the different policy actors involved in the implementation of the two programmes, **Child Grants Programme (CGP)** and **Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and Access to Government Services (SPRINGS)**. Further, it combines impact evaluation methods to analyse direct and indirect impacts of CGP and SPRINGS on their beneficiaries and their spillovers on the local economy.

In **Mali**, the case of study identified the strengths and weaknesses of the institutional architecture of the national social protection policy and also assessed the quality of its links and synergies with agricultural policies and programmes in Mali. The institutional analysis used a qualitative approach to assess the articulation between social protection and agricultural sectors (i) at the national level and (ii) in the case of the **Nioro Cash+ project**. Furthermore, the quantitative study used an impact evaluation methodology to assess the impacts of the Nioro Cash+ project on its beneficiaries across various livelihood aspects.

Finally, the case of **Zambia** brought together the results from three evaluations in an attempt to give a more integrated picture of the results of the **Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) Programme** and the **Conservation Agriculture Scale-Up (CASU)**. Further, it triangulated the findings and provided explanations in terms of complementarities between the programmes or their components.

Table 1. Summary of the cases analysed in Africa

Country Case	Political-Institutional Architecture	N° programmes	Intentionality	Analysis
Ethiopia PSNP+IN-SCT	Different programs, with complementary goals, which are the responsibility of different institutions and that are articulated amongst themselves.	2	Intended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact Evaluation • Institutional Analysis
Lesotho CGP+SPRINGS	Programs that are complementary in their design are the responsibility of one institution and constitute an integrated strategy.	2	Intended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact Evaluation • Institutional Analysis
Mali Nioro Cash + project	Single integrated program.	1	Intended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact Evaluation • Institutional Analysis
Zambia CASU+HGSF	Different programs, with complementary goals, which are the responsibility of different institutions.	2	Intended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact Evaluation

RESULTS OF THE IMPACT EVALUATIONS

Figure 1 shows the main results of the impact evaluations in five groups of standard variables: i) productive outcomes; ii) income, poverty, and local

economic development; iii) financial; iv) food security and education and; v) psychological and social variables.



PRODUCTIVE OUTCOMES

PSNP + IN-SCT

- + livestock
- + production of livestock by-products
- + average herd size
- + crop production

CGP + SPRINGS

- + access to markets

Nioro Cash +

- + livestock production

CASU + HGSE

- + livestock
- + marketing



INCOME, POVERTY & LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CGP + SPRINGS

- poverty gap
- + income
- + consumption

CASU + HGSE

- + total revenues
- poverty (simulation)
- + income distribution (simulation)



FOOD SECURITY & EDUCATION

CGP + SPRINGS

- + dietary diversity

Nioro Cash +

- + food security

CASU + HGSE

- + food security
- schooling



FINANCIAL

CGP + SPRINGS

- + household savings and borrowings
- + money saved and borrowed
- negative coping strategies
- + willingness to take risks



PSYCHOLOGICAL & SOCIAL

Nioro Cash +

- + aspirations for children's education

ETHIOPIA

This study measured the impacts of the PSNP and its combination with the IN-SCT package. It focused on crop and livestock production, non-farm enterprises, home gardens, adult labour supply, assets, and tools, as well as access to credit and extension services. The research was based on a double-difference approach with Inverse probability weighting (IPW), using three arms: the treatment arm, made up of the IN-SCT beneficiaries; the pure control group that included households in the same communities as the treated households but that were neither PSNP clients nor to be supported by the IN-SCT; the PSNP4-only group made up of PSNP clients (new and existing). Additionally, the research used two samples for the analysis, mother-child sample, and households with children under-5.

In the mother-child sample, the PSNP + IN-SCT has produced some positive, productive impacts, especially in the livestock sector, where both the share of households owning some livestock and the average herd size has increased substantially. The PSNP + IN-SCT also led to increased production of livestock by-products, while the impact on revenues from sales of by-products was insignificant (although sizable and positive). There were limited positive effects on the crop sector concentrated around cash crops, whose production increased both in terms of spread and average harvested amount.

The area of operated land was unaffected by the program too. Hence, the increases in crop production can be the result of improved land productivity from better production technology, changes in crop portfolio, or increased on-farm labour supply, among other possible causes. As to the hypothesis of improved production technology, the evaluation noticed that the PSNP + IN-SCT led to an increase in the spread of ploughs and the average number of pack animals. It did not find reduced exposure to crop shocks such as plant diseases and weed. Additionally, the study documented an

increase in crop diversification as a result of the PSNP + IN-SCT intervention. Finally, the study found a reduction of paid labour supply in both the agriculture and non-agriculture sector. Outside of farm production, the PSNP/IN-SCT also led to increased non-farm entrepreneurial activity, lending support to the idea of enhanced livelihood diversification.

In the sample of households with children under-5, the PSNP + IN-SCT produced almost no productive impacts, with very few exceptions, mostly on the negative side. The share of those involved in livestock and the average herd size was not affected by the program. The study did not document any impacts on production and revenues from the sales of livestock by-products. In the crop sector, the programme led to a reduction in the share of cereal growers, while more farmers started growing inset. The average harvest was unaffected for all major crops.

Regarding the institutional analysis, this case showed some important benefits of the articulation between the sectors involved (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs MoLSA, Ministry of Health MoH, and Ministry of Agriculture MoA). As a result of this experience, MoLSA has managed to improve its position and obtain recognition from other main sectors, which has enabled to generate more confidence in its capabilities. IN-SCT has also strengthened capacities in the different actors involved, where MoLSA has, once again, been benefited. Despite these positive aspects, the implementation of IN-SCT had to face the difficulties derived from the lack of formal binding mechanisms between the ministries involved, which resulted in the retention of IN-SCT budget by the Federal Food Safety Coordination Directorate (FSCD, which belongs to MoA). Despite the difficulties faced by the coordination mechanisms at the central and regional IN-SCT levels, the local level achieved important results, since it was able to integrate the services despite the difficulties.

LESOTHO

This research explored the impacts of CGP and SPRINGS on four specific topics: household welfare, financial inclusion and risk attitudes, nutrition, and local economy effects. This quasi-experimental design impact evaluation was carried out to assess the combined impacts of the CGP and SPRINGS. This evaluation has three treatment arms: i) households receiving both CGP and SPRINGS; ii) households receiving CGP but not SPRINGS; iii) Households receiving neither the CGP nor SPRINGS.

In terms of consumption and poverty, the effect of CGP + SPRINGS is positive at the margin on non-food consumption. It is negative and significant, on the poverty gap. Concerning income and market engagement, the evaluation found a substantial increase in income from sales of fruits and vegetables in the group of households benefitting from both programmes. CGP plus SPRINGS households not only were much more involved in homestead gardening production, 19.3 percentage points but also produced 2.3 more vegetables, had eight more harvests during the year, and were 9.9 percentage points more likely to process these harvested vegetables.

The second area of inquiry sought to analyse the impact of CGP and CGP + SPRINGS on financial inclusion and risk attitudes. The evaluation found that the combination of the CGP and SPRINGS resulted in a significant increase in the share of households saving and borrowing money (almost 370 and 115 percent increase, respectively). There was also an increase in the amount of money saved and borrowed (approximately 100 percent increase). Additionally, the evaluation found a reduction of negative coping strategies, such as cutting meals, going into debt - being forced to borrow from loan sharks in emergencies, engaging in daily piece work, or child labour.

As for risk attitudes, the impact evaluation found an increase in the willingness to take risks, especially in the CGP+SPRINGS beneficiaries, measured through survey questions and field-lab experiments. The impact of the combined programmes over time generated a sense of confidence and self-reliance. However, in the new CGP + SPRINGS cohort, the qualitative analysis reports little willingness to take risks because of late and irregular CGP payments, combined with a fear of being removed from the programme if households increased their returns by undertaking riskier activities.

The third area of inquiry focused on the impact of CGP and CGP + SPRINGS on nutrition, dietary practices, and knowledge. The qualitative and quantitative analyses showed that the programmes implementation resulted in an improvement of dietary diversity due to an increase in the consumption of green vegetables, fruits, organic meat, dairy, and legumes.

The final area of inquiry investigated the impact of CGP and CGP + SPRINGS on the local economy, studying the effect of the programmes on market demand and supply. Four main findings emerged from the LEWIE analysis. First, CGP created both nominal and real income multipliers. Second, combining CGP with keyhole gardens and savings groups, individually or in combination, led to higher real income multipliers. Third, the combination of CGP with increased access to markets, which is supposed to reduce transaction costs, increased the real income impacts of CGP and CGP + SPRINGS. Finally, LEWIE analysis produced results on the cost-effectiveness of CGP and CGP + SPRINGS. The findings showed that CGP, alone and in combinations with SPRINGS components, generates total discounted benefits that exceeded discounted programme



costs. Real income benefit-cost ratios, considering the income spillovers created in the local economy, range from 1.49 (CGP+savings groups) to 2.31 CGP + Market Clubs. The benefit-cost ratio from combining CGP with the full array of SPRINGS components (2.22) exceeds that from CGP alone (1.63).

Regarding the institutional analysis, the study identified the evolution of the targeting methodology for both CGP and SPRINGS as a key process that made articulation between them possible and effective. In terms of the intensity of coordination between the various actors involved in planning and implementing these two interventions, there was a fair degree of

collaboration on the ground (community councils and villages). Still, coordination was weak at the district and central levels. Additionally, it was highlighted a limited technical capacity, inadequate financial resources, inadequate human resources across all ministries, and high staff turnover across all ministries.

MALI

The study evaluated the effectiveness and impacts of the Nioro Cash+ project, comparing the outcomes of three groups: i) Cash only- households, ii) Cash+ households, and iii) non-beneficiary households. It analysed the impact on different aspects of livelihood, namely food security, food diet, livestock production, non-farm activities, food and non-food consumption, hygiene, aspirations, and expectations for the future.

The project supported livestock production through the distribution of goats and the provision of zootechnical monitoring to each household benefiting from the Cash+ kit. It was observed a significant increase in livestock production among the Cash+ beneficiaries. Cash+ beneficiaries' average gross income from livestock was 68.5 percent and 88.2 percent greater than it would if they had been in the control group or received Cash Only, respectively. Households getting Cash+ also had a volume of livestock that was 85.4 percent higher than if they had received Cash Only. However, the qualitative study revealed that the quantity of livestock feed given to the Cash+ beneficiaries (50 kg) was not sufficient for the duration of the project and led some people to buy more with their own money, which could have been to the detriment of other human needs.

In terms of food security, the study found a significant impact of the Cash+ treatment on its beneficiaries, compared to the situation where they had not been included in the programme. On average, the proportion of households who never had to worry about having enough food increased by 70.5 percent with Cash+. The Cash+ beneficiaries were also 7.1 percent less likely to experience any level of food insecurity than if they had received Cash Only.

Regarding aspirations and expectations, the quantitative study did not find any significant impacts of the programme on the respondents' expectations of better socioeconomic conditions in the future. However, the study did observe positive and significant impacts of the programme

on the aspirations for children's education. The Cash Only and Cash+ beneficiaries were, respectively, 51.9 and 16.3 percent more likely to aspire that their children would reach university level compared to non-beneficiaries.

Concerning institutional assessment, the study evaluated five subtopics: (i) political commitment, (ii) policy context, (iii) institutional coordination mechanisms, (iv) funding mechanisms, and (v) human capabilities. In terms of political commitment, it was found that the Government of Mali holds a high political commitment to developing the two sectors of social protection and agriculture. Concerning the policy context, even though high-level commitments existed to build up coherence between social protection and agriculture, they were not widely admitted and upheld across all political levels.

In terms of coordination mechanisms, although several mechanisms exist, they present some problems: i) Certain mechanisms are very cumbersome due to the many bodies involved at the national level; ii) very few of the statutory meetings are held; iii) certain key stakeholders are not represented in some of the mechanisms; iv) little consideration is given to the financing and operation of the mechanisms; and, v) there is no reference to the desire for coherence between agriculture and social protection as well as no linkage between the mechanisms in the two sectors.

About funding mechanisms and human resource capacities, the study found: i) None of the funding for the two sectors explicitly integrates the issue of coordination and ii) None of the funding considers the possibility of pooling resources to enhance coherence. Finally, the analysis found the human resource qualities that are required to support coherence between social protection and agricultural intervention are weak in terms of: i) the ability to produce and share convincing data; ii) the skill to facilitate inter-sectoral alliances and partnerships; iii) the ability to design, execute, monitor and evaluate coherent policies and programmes.

ZAMBIA

This case of study brought together the results from three evaluations in an attempt to give a more integrated picture of the results of the Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) Programme and the Conservation Agriculture Scale-Up (CASU). The study evaluated impacts on production and welfare variables. The impact evaluation is based on a post-test only non-equivalent control group design, with only one wave of post-intervention data. The evaluation included four arms: HGSF-only arm; CASU-only arm; HGSF + CASU arm and Control arm.

For farm production outcomes, CASU and CASU + HGSF produce mostly positive effects, while the HGSF features mixed impacts. In terms of farmers' commercialisation, maize and groundnuts were the most sold crops in the sample, the increase in the number of maize and groundnuts sellers was considerably larger than the impacts observed for single programmes. Additionally, total revenues increased in the three treatment groups, generally sustained by the qualitative study when it reports that households have changed their use of harvests, from mostly keeping products for household consumption to now being able to consume and sell.

On the other hand, the share of farmers engaged in raising livestock was around 80 percent for the CASU-only and the combined arm; it falls to 60 percent in the control arm and 43 percent in the HGSF group. Engagement in livestock by-product production was relatively low in the study sample; it varied from 12 percent in the CASU arm to 1.6 percent in HGSF. Both the CASU and the combined programmes led to considerable increases in the share of farmers dealing with by-products, while the HGSF produced no significant results for this outcome. The analysis also looked at farmers' involvement in livestock markets in terms of spread and sale revenues. The most-traded animals were goats and chickens; between 10 and 23 percent of farmers sold

small ruminants in the 12 months preceding the surveys. CASU increased the beneficiaries' market engagement as they sold more cows, goats, and chickens. The HGSF programme was associated mainly with a reduction in the sale of animals.

Concerning total income, the quantitative study found that the HGSF programme led to a reduction in the gross income of 40 percent. CASU had no statistically significant impact on gross income, but it did lead to an increase in livestock income. The combined treatment increased gross income by around 43 percent, driven mostly by the crop sector and non-farm business sales.

Regarding food security and schooling indicators, the study highlighted the positive effects of offering meals on both groups of outcomes. However, when zooming in, and considering the impacts of the HGSF, the impacts on schooling are nullified and those on food security become negative. The CASU project had positive impacts on food security, while not affecting schooling decisions, as expected. The combination of CASU and HGSF led to positive impacts on food security and some negative impacts on schooling.

Finally, the microsimulation exercise explored the distributional impacts of combining HGSF program and CASU project. For CASU's productive support and the HGSF's local purchases program, the results showed that before the intervention, program participants were generally less poor than those not participating in programs. In terms of the overall income distribution, CASU and HGSF have a slightly equalising effect. Microsimulation of the school meals component of HGSF showed that if school feeding were scaled up to reach universal coverage, it would increase school attendance rates by 4.7 percentage points, on average, as compared with a scenario with no school feeding.

Key lessons from the institutional analysis

The results showed the importance of four aspects to achieve an enabling environment for social protection and rural productive interventions.

The first crucial aspect is **political commitment**. Even so, the evidence indicates that this is not sufficient by itself to ensure that the different sectors and their institutions work in an articulated manner and manage to generate common cooperation agreements.

It is necessary to complement political commitment with adequate technical conditions that make articulation possible. In this sense, three aspects play a crucial role: coordination mechanism, funding mechanism, and human and physical capacities.

The need for formal **coordination mechanisms** is evident throughout the public policy cycle and at all levels of implementation. Some of the cases analysed have coordination and collaboration mechanisms, mainly in the design and planning phases. However, in the implementation phases, collaboration and coordination are diluted. Regarding the different levels of implementation, it is evident that at the central level, there are some formal mechanisms of articulation, while at the district and local levels, the articulation between the interventions is carried out more informally. Other critical aspects of a design that promotes coordination are the targeting and definition of the target population. The experiences analysed showed that targeting could be a key instrument of articulation.

Regarding **funding mechanisms**, the analysis showed the need to pool resources to implement joint programmes. Additionally, budgetary aspects play a decisive role in the processes of articulation and coordination of policies and programs, especially when those involved have different views on institutional work, and articulation is seen as a cost rather than a benefit.

In terms of human and physical resources, there is a need to have sufficient human support in all implementations level, and this human resource has to be trained in the importance of multisectoral interventions. Finally, the studies illustrated the need to produce and share convincing data for the focalisation, the implementation and the follow-up of the programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout this document, it was illustrated how the synergies between social and productive programs in Africa have generated positive effects on productive outcomes, household's income, food security, and financial outcomes. These results invite to persist in the search for these types of synergies.

Although the impact evaluations found synergies between the two types of programs, the institutional evaluation showed how these synergies could be enhanced.

The institutional analysis showed that in the African cases, the agricultural sector has greater importance than other sectors, including social protection. Nonetheless, they are reticent to work with social sectors, which are the most recently created, and have a less consolidated budget, human and technical resources. For these reasons, the proposal is to have one programme with two types of components under the direction of the ministries of agriculture in order to take advantage of the institutional and technical capacities of this sector.

On the other hand, in Africa, NGOs and International Cooperation have an essential role in the design, funding, and even program implementation. These organizations are playing a key role in promoting articulation processes and solving difficulties associated with a weakness in the technical and budgeting capacity from the region.

This requires continuing relying on a strategy of financial and technical support through cooperation agencies, international NGOs, and the public sector, to contribute to the strengthening of the ministries and public services, including the design of formal coordination mechanisms that generate the right incentives to promote coordination. The institutional weakness may be an opportunity to incorporate cooperation and coordination arrangements from early stages, which can be difficult to promote in contexts of greater institutional strength, but also of greater rigidity.

It is also recommended to pay special attention, from the design stage to the role expected for local level in programs' implementation. This recommendation is viable based on adequate and exhaustive knowledge of capacities, actors and resistances that can operate at the local level. In this way, it is possible to build on its strengths and mitigate the possible risks derived from the inadequate consideration of the key role that the local level plays, as shown by the analyses.

TECHNICAL SHEET

The Project

Over the past few years, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), together with Universidad de Los Andes and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have been analysing the potential synergistic effects of interventions on rural households that involve social protection programmes and productive rural development projects. IFAD and the Universidad de Los Andes have implemented this project through the “Conditional Cash Transfers and Rural Development in Latin America” grant (www.sinergiasrurales.info); and FAO through the project entitled “From Protection to Production: The role of Social Cash Transfers in the Promotion of Economic Development” (PtoP) (www.fao.org/economic/ptop). Some evidence of such synergies and complementarities has been identified, but the evidence has also raised new questions. These inquiries are related to the types of synergies and how to take advantage of them, the correct sequencing of programme rollout, the institutional reforms that need to take place, and the political economy behind these options, and thus improve the results of the programmes.

To answer some of these questions, the project entitled “Improving the Coordination between Social Protection and Rural Development Interventions in Developing Countries: Lessons from Latin America and Africa” - which is being developed by the Universidad de Los Andes (UNIANDES), through its Centre for Economic Development Studies (CEDE), and financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) - seeks to gather evidence of the benefits of such coordinated interventions.

The goal of the project is to gather evidence for policymakers and donors of the benefits of the coordinated interventions that could provide inputs regarding the appropriate institutional and operational design, and enable them to use these inputs as a basis for improving anti-poverty interventions targeted at rural households, thus helping smallholders to take a proactive part in rural transformation.

The main objective of the project is to try to influence governmental institutions related to rural development and social protection (anti-poverty) policies so that they can take advantage of identified synergies between social protection and productive initiatives. The project was implemented in seven countries, three in Latin America and four in Africa, through two types of analysis: Institutional Analysis and Impact Evaluations.

The evaluation carried out

For the four African cases, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mali, and Zambia, the project run an impact or results evaluation. The evaluations collect information on the actual changes in the beneficiaries of the programs, intending to show if, and to what extent, the interventions have achieved effective changes in the behaviour and characteristics of their beneficiaries. The impact evaluations are accompanied by a qualitative evaluation to inquire about synergies between programs.



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With the technical support of: