



# **BIODIVERSE**

## **CONSULTING**

**SUEZ & Habitat Banks**

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**NERF MAY 2024**



# AGENDA



- 01 INTRODUCTION – Biodiversity Net Gain BASICS
- 02 WHY SUEZ– Landfill & Habitat Bank Opportunities
- 03 THE PROJECT – A phased approach
- 04 SUEZ NEXT STEPS – Let’s go!
- 05 FINAL THOUGHTS – For the waste sector..
- 06 QUESTIONS, THOUGHTS, OBSERVATIONS??

01



# INTRODUCTION

BNG Basics





# STATE OF NATURE

2023 |  state of nature  
PARTNERSHIP

Chris O'Reilly (trapb-images.com)

## WHY BNG?

### THE SIXTH MASS EXTINCTION

- Nature in the UK is still seriously declining: We are already one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.
- *'The UK itself has lost much of its wildlife, ranking 189<sup>th</sup> for biodiversity loss out of 218 nations in 2016,' London Zoological Society 2018.*
- The UK has now legally binding targets to halt species decline by 2030 and international targets in the Global Biodiversity Framework to protect 30% of land and seas by 2030
- *'The current [planning] system only really works well to avoid the most severe impacts on biodiversity and the best sites for wildlife, but less well the manage the gradual erosion of lower value habitats. Cumulatively, even 'insignificant' losses of habitat at a development scale add up to significant rates of biodiversity loss overall,' UK Government 2018. Biodiversity Net Gain consultation in England*



# WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN?

**Simply put, '*Biodiversity Net Gain is development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before,*'**  
**CIEEM 2018**

## The Basics!

- Takes habitat information from field surveys
- Plugs it into a metric
- The output is quantified into “Biodiversity Units”
- Information on post construction landscape or habitat creation/enhancement scheme is plugged into Metric
- 2 elements pulled together to establish whether development will be positive or negative and by how much.
- For a landowner the output this is the no. / type of Biodiversity Units generated.
- Each Unit has a monetary value.

**Allowing a means to speak the Universal Language... ££!**



# BIODIVERSITY REGULATIONS

## BIODIVERSITY HIERARCHY

- As of 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 all development in England must achieve a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Gain
- Measured by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric
- 10% achieved following the Biodiversity Hierarchy
- Biodiversity Gains secured via a Pre-Commencement Planning Condition and set out in a Biodiversity Gain Plan
- Developers purchase Biodiversity Units from Registered Offsite Gain Providers i.e. Registered & Approved Habitat Banks
- Biodiversity Units need to be the right type i.e. like for like or better distinctiveness habitats. Supply and Demand
- Development cannot begin until 10% achieved via purchase of Biodiversity Units and allocated





# THE REVISED PROCESS: FOR THE LANDOWNER

i.e. how does a  
landowner create  
Registered Off-site  
Biodiversity Gain  
(ROBG)





# LANDOWNER DETAIL – STOP THE PRESS!!

## Biodiversity Unit Price Alert

Guidance published in October states that landowners should “come up with a price for your units”.

Based on:

- Management of the land covering at least 30 years
- Monitoring and reporting
- Ecologist or other experts’ costs
- Insurance
- Costs to cover work if the habitat fails
- Machinery, tools and other staff to carry out the tasks
- Inflation and market competition costs
- The cost of experts to review your legal agreement

ROBGs need to agree payment terms i.e. lump sum, staged payment, results







02

# WHY SUEZ?

LANDFILL & HABITAT BANK OPPORTUNITIES





# THE BNG OPPORTUNITY

- SUEZ have a portfolio of over 80 landfills across the UK with only 4 currently active
- Once landfilling has stopped sites still need to be monitored under the environmental permit regime until there is no risk
- SUEZ already required to plan for ongoing management and monitoring costs relating to the landfill for many decades to come and this model can be extended to cover the requirement to manage & monitor habitat banks for 30 years
- As such, the model for BNG habitat creation fits in really well with the current financial model





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# The Project

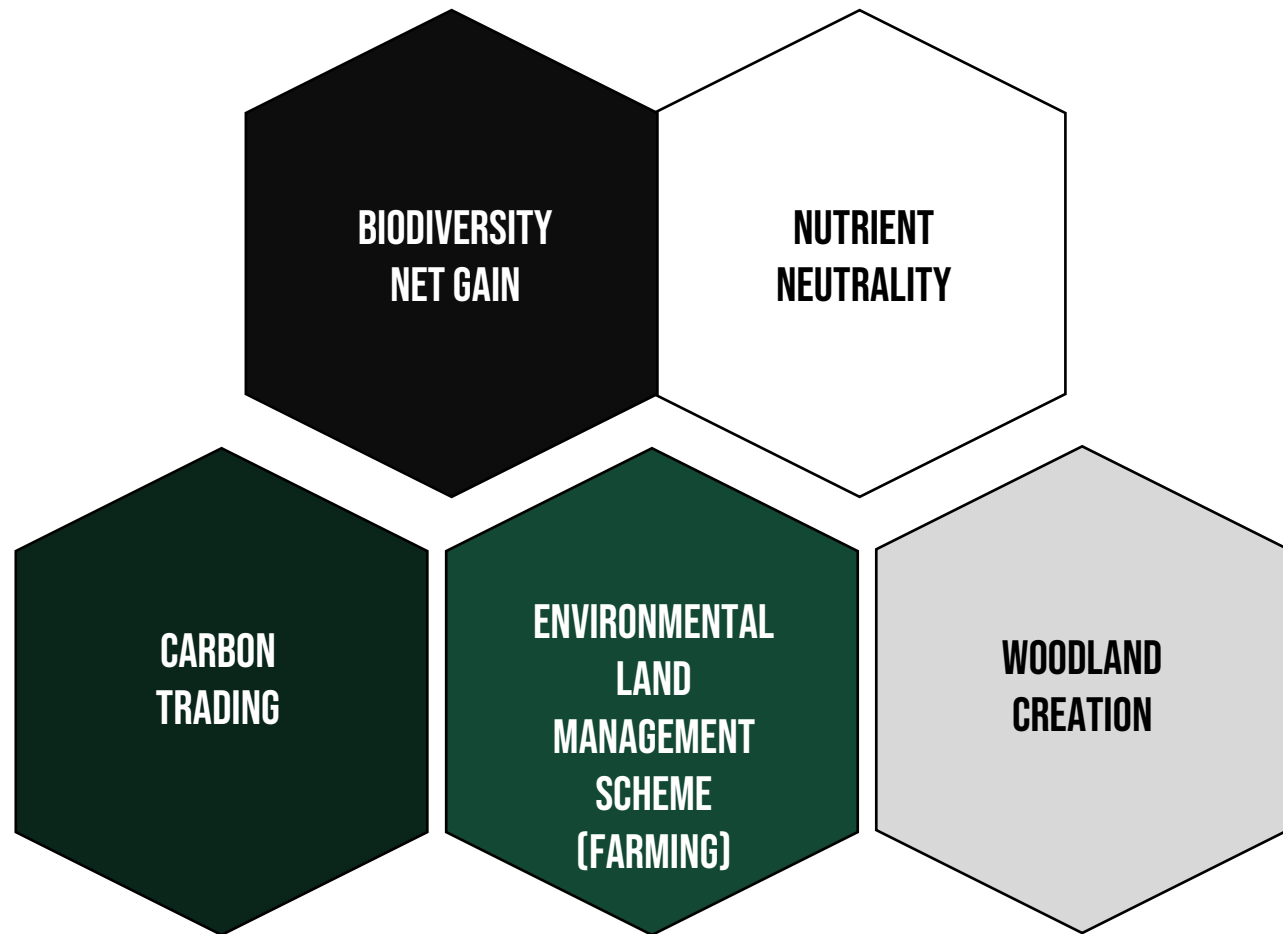
A Phased Approach





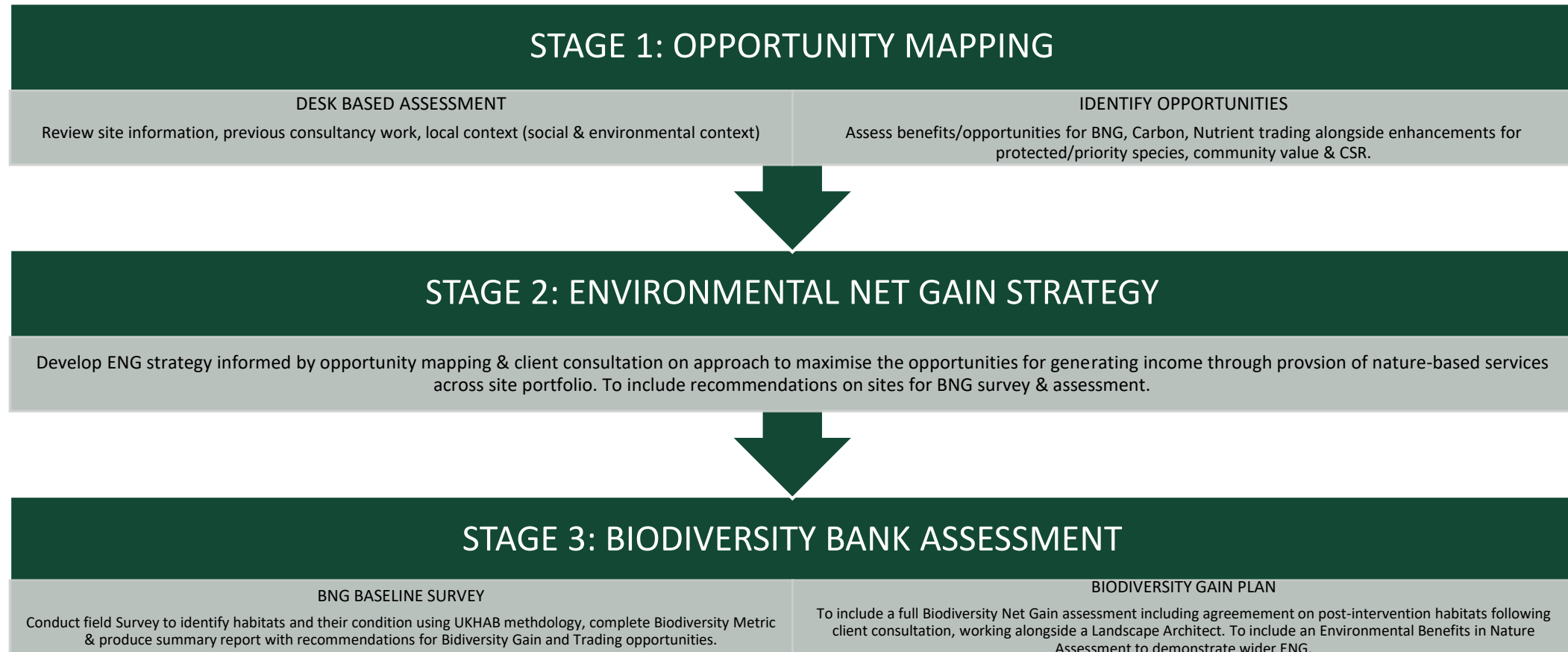
# Environmental Net Gain

- 25-Year Environment Plan has committed Government to exploring the potential for a wider Environmental Net Gain “*In future, we want to **expand the net gain approaches used for biodiversity to include wider natural capital benefits, such as flood protection, recreation and improved water and air quality**”.*
- *1 metric to rule them all!*
- *For SUEZ this means a focus on Carbon, Nutrient & Biodiversity Trading schemes whilst ensuring community engagement/benefits remained at the forefront of possible opportunities.*





# PHASE 1: Desk Based





# OUR APPROACH

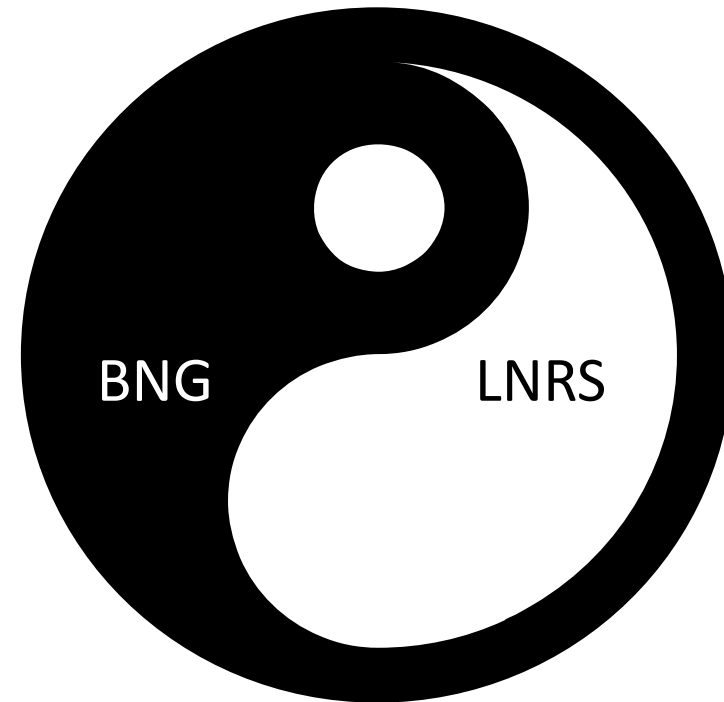
- Data Collection from site managers, planning team and third-party databases
- Collate information into one cohesive database on 27 sites
- Shortlisting of sites in consultation with Regional Managers & planning team with a focus on Biodiversity Net Gain, but identification of other Nature Based Income initiatives for other sites if appropriate.
- Selected sites considered high priority

Site name	Site manager	Postcode	Longitude	Latitude	Year	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	To be removed	Meeting Dates	BNG	LPA	Land ownership	Other maps	Site condition	Planning conditions
Bramble	Den Ferguson	NE17 9NF	55.0688	N2 1	10	Y	Y	Y	N			Newcastle City Council	Suez own freehold, restored to woodland (under 2010 woodland grant scheme) with wildflower glade, still in aftercare.	Landscape restoration proposal map 2022 inside 2022 aftercare report	Open flat landscape with some lower damper areas. Aftercare actions already taken: woodland planting, shrub planting for hedgerows including roadside hedge creation, hedge gaps filled, wood and glade replaced with yellow rattle, weed removal from base of trees, fertiliser and herbicide application, wildflower meadow creation. Strategy for remaining aftercare: cut wildflower glade, hedge maintenance, replacement of oak trees with mats instead of herbicide.	Aftercare sept 2012-sept 2023 subject to a list inspection from the planning authority. Aims of 'woodland planting with wildflower interest' whilst providing 'visual and nature conservation benefits'. In 2020 an ecology review (report attached) was commissioned after the planning authority expressed concern that the tree planting had not established in the way originally envisaged. The site was shown to have nature benefits other than blanket tree cover and agreed to remain in aftercare.
Burnhills	Den Ferguson	NE21 5TA	54.9536	N2 1	67	Y	Y	Y	N			Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	Suez own freehold, restored to agriculture, hay meadows and woodland belts, aftercare period completed on earlier phases 1A, 2A, 2B (woodland grant funded tree planting) but later phases 3 to 6 still in aftercare until Feb 2025. Includes surrounding land (blue boundary Burnhills Asbuhl restoration drawing, Durham Wildlife Trust manage the old silt lagoons (part of Barlow Burn SNC) to the south of the landfilled area for SUEZ. Land to the west is farmed, so there is likely to be a farming tenancy in place.	Landscape restoration proposal map 2015 inside 2022 aftercare report	Soil restoration complete 2011 (incorporation of grey compost), french drains installed. Phases 1-2 restored to agricultural farmland, phases 3-6 will have 2 hay meadows (in 2022, pH of 7.8 to 8.0, available phosphorus index 0-1, potassium 1-2 and magnesium 3), woodland/woodland edge, scrub planting, and a bridleway link. Phases 3 to 6 are the two hay meadows in yellow and the brighter green tree planting areas shown on the Burnhills Asbuhl restoration drawing.	Objective: establish linked network of predominantly indigenous woodland, provide a sustainable agricultural resource (some may be used for amenity in short term). Have a draft management plan for highland cow grazing, once approved will be followed for minimum 10 years (ie until 2032), seeking to remove a requirement under the planning permission to install agricultural field drainage in these areas, in return for which a long term commitment to conservation grazing of the two hay meadows has been offered up. The conservation grazing management (currently a small number of highland cattle) has allowed the two meadows to continue to provide very successful skylark.
Catlin Howe	Den Ferguson	TS4 6RE	54.5518	N2 1	18	Y	Y	Y	N			Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	Handed back to the landowner further to its release from aftercare in 2021. Suez only have rights to monitor/manage the landfill now, as they retain the environmental permit.		make the land usable for agriculture, with compensatory habitat created for the great crested newts which had to be moved out to facilitate the landfill. Site operation stopped halfway due to another wasteland plus ECN mitigation conservation and high water table made landfill unviable. Phase 1 completed capping and restoration to grassland (these grazing fenced off). Phases 2 and 3 are in their natural state as landfilling never took place. There are ECN ponds to the east.	No conditions attached to planning permission, but had to last 5 years (march 2016-march 2021). Aftercare objectives: correct soil physical and chemical deficiencies, remediation of differential capping and restoration to grassland (these grazing fenced off), establish conservation grassland hedgerows and woodland, provision of appropriate field water supply and maintain fencing and ditches. Approved aftercare mainly agricultural, some areas of wildlife.



# PHASE 2: SURVEYS & PLANS

- A Habitat survey of some key sites to understand what the baseline Biodiversity Unit Value is
- A plan to understand what can be done in order to gain an uplift in biodiversity value over 30 years
- In discussion with Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) leads to understand their vision for the areas and how we can try to coincide with that to maximise Biodiversity Unit yield



# EXAMPLE SITE: BURNHILLS, GATESHEAD







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# SUEZ – Next Steps

Let's go!





# NEXT STEPS

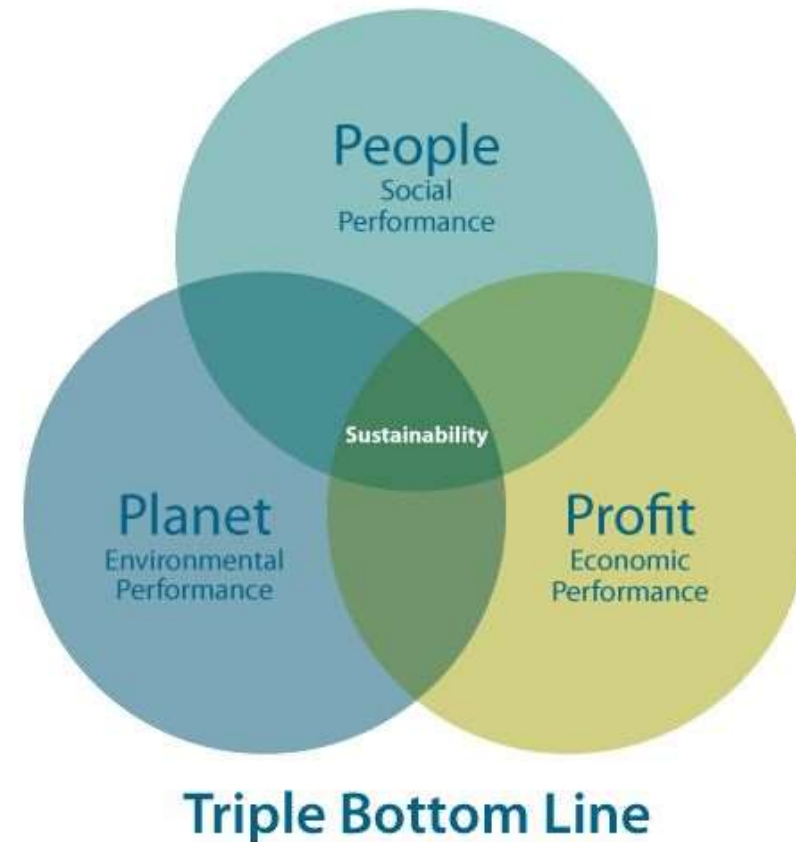
- Complete detailed habitat & ecological surveys
- Soil Testing
- Write & agree Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan
- Submit to Local Planning Authority for approval and planning obligation (section 106 agreement)
- Register Site
- Sell Biodiversity Units to developers





# WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SUEZ?

- SUEZ have a triple bottom line of 'People, Planet & Profit'
- The creation of BNG habitat units is also more valuable for our native wildlife and might also benefit surrounding communities if access can also be enhanced
- In the future we hope to be able to use any units created to offset any future development needs of the business as well as be able to sell them on the open market for developers (preferably locally) to be able to meet their own 10% BNG uplift requirements



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# Final Thoughts

For the waste sector..



# SOME FINAL OBSERVATIONS



- In the Longer Term BNG does offer genuine opportunities to support Nature's Recovery and meet those 2030 targets but we need to ensure that people and wildlife are still integrated. The waste sector can do this!
- BNG provides a mechanism to get much needed income into wildlife and conservation projects.
- The Waste Sector's extensive land management experience means that can BNG management will be much cheaper & have scale on your size!
- Need to get in early, before the market becomes saturated.
- Need to get the Legals sorted!
- Start discussing with LPAs on how to discharge legal conditions that would prevent becoming habitat banks
- Start talking to local developers to create Biodiversity Units they need.



Source: Collaborative Design

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Questions, thoughts,  
observations??





# **BIODIVERSE**

## **CONSULTING**

# THANK YOU

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