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STRENGTHENING RURAL POPULATIONS' LIVELIHOODS RESILIENCE THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF NONAGRICULTURAL SHORT CIRCUITS IN THE POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

March 2024

SDGs:



Country:

Brazil

Project Code:

TCP/BRA/3802

FAO Contribution:

USD 220 000

Duration:

1 March 2022–15 December 2023

Contact Info:

FAO Representation in Brazil
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Implementing Partners

Undersecretariat of Rural Women, Ministry of Agrarian Development and Family Farming.

Beneficiaries

Brazilian rural producers, including traditional communities and indigenous peoples, both women and men, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with special focus on the non-agricultural rural businesses sector.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

CPF Result 1 Food security - The right to adequate and healthy food on a permanent and sustainable basis; Output 1.2 - Demonstrative actions on food security and nutrition destined to indigenous peoples, traditional communities and Quilombolas. CPF Result 3 - Overcoming Extreme Poverty; Output 3.1 - Initiatives and programs for the rural inclusive production in the North and Northeast of Brazil implemented.

Regional Initiative: Hand-in-Hand towards prosperous and inclusive rural societies.



BACKGROUND

From the first months of 2020, rural populations in Brazil were confronted with a sudden disruption of their commercialization channels by the COVID-19 pandemic. They were among the most affected by the sanitary crisis due to trade, mobility and sanitary restrictions. As a result, rural producers, including traditional communities and indigenous peoples, both women and men, saw their monetary income generation jeopardized.

The non-agricultural rural businesses sector, especially those related to services such as trade, tourism and handicraft, is dominated by women. The development of the non-agricultural rural business sector was weak even before the pandemic, for a number of reasons, both institutional and societal.

In this context, this project aimed at increasing the resilience of rural economic activities by strengthening “short circuits” of non-agricultural rural products and services, thus creating sustainable commercialization channels and solidarity networks and new opportunities for those whose livelihoods had been compromised.

The approach of this project consisted in the identification of a set of non-agricultural policy options and lines of action: i) innovation in the conservation of rural non-agricultural products; ii) digitalizing the commercialization of rural and non-agricultural products; iii) strengthening and encouraging associativity; iv) alliances with the private sector; and v) sanitation of goods, or any other area that could be identified during the first phase of this project through assessments and profile understanding of the target territories.

IMPACT

The project significantly contributed to strengthening rural populations' livelihoods resilience through the promotion of non-agricultural short circuits in the post COVID-19 pandemic, and promoted income generation in six targeted territories.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project was designed with a clear approach that aimed at mapping the livelihoods of specific groups and developing their productive capacities through tailor-made capacity-building sessions. It was executed with previously identified local associations/groups, including rural women producers, in six targeted territories, adopting a short circuits approach in non-agricultural sectors by local governments that aimed at its replication across the country.

The project was structured on the basis of five products, with which it was possible to respond to the identified problem. These products included actions and activities such as mapping and assessment of the targeted territories and capacitation of the technical team and consultants on FAO's Policy on Gender Equality, and Environmental and Social Safeguards, to guarantee an adequate approach with the rural groups; provision of technical assistance to the government to promote the adoption and implementation of non-agricultural short circuits recommendations in order to benefit local producer associations; the elaboration of a guide establishing Public Private Partnerships (PPP), with a focus on generating job opportunities, and new sources of income for the population; activities to assist local communities in the identification and promotion of digital applications adoption; and systematization of experiences into a methodological guide.

In addition, guidance was delivered and “know-how” tools within the rural women groups to enable them to start the reorganization of their own production and increase its resilience to future shocks, thus, contributing directly to the SDGs 1, 2 and 5. Furthermore, the project successfully implemented, working directly on the target groups/associations of the six territories, the short circuits approach defined at the beginning of its conception. In addition, the training activities provided by the project successfully supported each of the six rural women groups to identify and address specific deficiencies related to their trade channels, definition of price ranges, consumers, publicity, and so on.

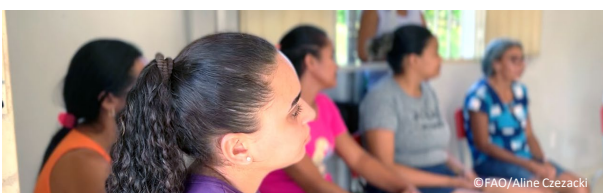
IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

The project took the necessary actions to address the drawbacks detected in each phase and thus be able to adapt the execution of the work plan. Despite the necessity to overcome obstacles such as the limited connectivity that groups faced, long distances, gender violence, and lack of cohesion within some groups, project activities were executed within the established timelines. During the project, the project team kept an open and direct communication channel with every group leadership to assess risks and define mitigation actions for sudden events that could have delayed implementation. Finally, all activities were executed within the planned budget, and the planned contracts and consultancies were executed on time.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The project successfully implemented the short circuits approach in the six territories defined at the beginning of the conception phase of the project; however, some local governments could have participated more fully in the project activities. It is suggested to strengthen the coordination to develop a roadmap for upscaling the intervention. This could be jointly prepared with the government counterpart when presenting the main results of the project.

It is necessary to follow up with local governments to promote the adoption of the project's approach within their institutionality, to further support the benefited groups. To ensure continuity in this approach, the federal government will be consulted and invited to prepare a second round of interventions that promote a short circuits approach for non-agricultural rural women groups.



SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

From a federal perspective, Brazil has cutting-edge programmes for public purchases from family farmers' products that could benefit the target groups of the intervention; however, the lack of information of the groups on the ongoing programmes and policies causes them to be left behind in terms of improving their livelihoods. Local governments have not shown institutional capacity to properly support the groups, despite the existence of federal, state and local regulations that could guarantee access to credit and expansion of trade channels.

Apart from liaising with local governments, the project kept the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Family Farming informed on the intervention and its implementation strategy. The presentation of results will be a key milestone for the project since it will ensure that the ministry is properly informed and will give rise to inquiry on the replicability of the intervention via national funding sources.

2. Gender equality

The project made women visible as an important part of the target population, with affirmative actions, considering their limited access to and control over resources, productive assets, financial services, training, and technical assistance, and highlighted the important role they play in the production chain and market access. The project was designed to deliver a targeted intervention for groups of non-agricultural rural women producers. Thus, every activity was conceived to support and promote the development of the productive and trade capacities of those groups. Men were benefited by the project, since they were participating in the groups, but the main beneficiaries were the female members of the businesses.

The project implemented a two-phased intervention that included a socioeconomic mapping of the targeted groups, and the preparation of capacity-building activities tailored to address the identified need of the producers. To confirm that the intervention met the desired results, frequent consultations with the beneficiaries were conducted before, during and after the trainings.

3. Environmental sustainability

The actions implemented under the project did not have negative environmental impacts due to the nature of most of its clean implemented activities. The project used virtual tools for communication with the groups, and only contributed to greenhouse gas emissions when travelling either by car or plane.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

The intervention delivered training sessions to improve the beneficiary's "know-how" on rural enterprises. At the same time, the activities were accompanied by the office gender focal point, who used every encounter with the groups to emphasize the importance of considering gender differences in terms of equal distribution of workload and domestic chores, and the necessity of empowering women leadership.

5. Technological sustainability

The project used mostly regular means of communication such as cell phones with internet connection and computers. Since every group had some level of internet connection, consultations faced minor difficulties. Specific trainings on digital platforms sought to present simple and efficient alternatives that producers could use even with limited internet access. The designed trainings aimed at improving and/or developing both basic and specific knowledge that groups could use to boost their production. Each step of their production chains was evaluated by the project consultants and improvement suggestions were given.

Group and associations generally lack internal coordination, and it is necessary to gradually implement the knowledge delivered by the intervention, to develop their businesses.

6. Economic sustainability

No additional resources have been mobilized as yet. This will be discussed with the government counterpart. All project deliverables were custom-made bearing in mind their appropriation by the groups. Learning materials are available in PDF, and printing versions were shared with the groups' members. Additionally, every training session was recorded so that the participants could rewatch them if necessary.



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DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ **Facini, C.** 2023. *Six brochures with detailed information on the specific trainings for each group/association.*
- ❑ **Facini, C.** 2023. *Technical report with short circuits approach methodology - Metodologia adotada nas capacitações de cada um dos grupos/associações.*
- ❑ **Facini, C.** 2023. *Technical report. Documento técnico contendo Proposta técnica para a capacitação de cada um dos grupos/associações.*
- ❑ **Fundação de Estudos Agrários Luiz de Queiroz (FEALQ).** 2023. *Final diagnosis on the targeted groups - 7 (sete) a 9 (nove) relatórios técnicos contendo diagnósticos consolidados das condições de vida das 6 (seis) a (8) comunidades/associações de mulheres que exercem atividades rurais não-agrícolas, um diagnóstico por grupo (6 a 8 individuais) e 1 diagnóstico comparando os 6 (seis) a 8 (oito) grupos de mulheres.*
- ❑ **FEALQ.** 2023. *Interviews script. Proposta de questionário semiestruturado para entrevista, considerando as condições de vida no período antes, durante e após a pandemia da COVID-19, elaborada com base na experiência acumulada em projetos anteriores realizados pela FEALQ e pela FAO, alinhada ao quadro conceitual do diagnóstico socioeconômico, em consultas e validação com a equipe do projeto.*
- ❑ **FEALQ.** 2023. *Preliminar diagnosis 01/06: Cooperativa de Extrativistas e Agricultores Familiares da Estrada do Arroz (COOPEAFE) – Povoado de São Felix, município de Imperatriz, estado do Maranhão.*
- ❑ **FEALQ.** 2023. *Preliminar diagnosis 02/06: Grupo de Mulheres Renascer – Assentamento Mata do Baú, município de Goiás, estado de Goiás.*
- ❑ **FEALQ.** 2023. *Preliminar diagnosis 03/06: Grupo de Mulheres do Assentamento Pico Estreito/Tiradentes no município de Baraúna (RN).*
- ❑ **FEALQ.** 2023. *Preliminar diagnosis 04/06: Cooperativa dos Assentados, Acampados e Quilombolas do Sul da Bahia – Coopceta Sul, municípios de Ibirapitanga e Santa Luzia, estado da Bahia.*
- ❑ **FEALQ.** 2023. *Preliminar diagnosis 05/06: Grupo Andorinha, município de Batalha, estado do Piauí.*
- ❑ **FEALQ.** 2023. *Preliminar diagnosis 06/06: Quilombo Raiz, Serra do Espinhaço, município de Presidente Kubitschek, estado de Minas Gerais.*
- ❑ **Rural Commerce.** 2023. *Business Map. Modelos de negócios rurais sustentáveis.*
- ❑ **Rural Commerce.** 2023. *Course program. Modelos de negócios rurais sustentáveis.*
- ❑ **Rural Commerce.** 2023. *Recorded sessions of the six on-site courses on sustainable rural businesses for the targeted groups of the TCP – “Seis cursos ministrados para os empreendimentos rurais seguindo o conteúdo didático indicado na proposta do curso, um curso presencial em cada município onde se localizam os grupos.”*

- ❑ **Rural Commerce.** 2023. Slide presentation. *Modelos de negócios rurais sustentáveis.*
- ❑ **Rural Commerce.** 2023. Teaching material. *Modelos de negócios rurais sustentáveis.*
- ❑ **Rural Commerce.** 2023. *Technical report - Relatório técnico contendo a sistematização detalhada dos conteúdos abordados durante os cursos, juntamente com recomendações gerais e lições aprendidas sobre os empreendimentos rurais capacitados.*
- ❑ **Vanildo do Nascimento, J.** 2023. *Technical guide for fostering commercial partnerships. Guia técnico de parcerias.*



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|--|-----------------|
| Expected Impact | Resilience in terms of food security and income improvements for rural women, indigenous people, Quilombolas and other traditional communities in the context of the COVID-19 recovery with transformation (SDG 1 and 2) has been increased | | |
| Outcome | The adoption of a short circuits approach in non-agricultural sectors by local governments in six targeted territories aiming to its replication across the country | | |
| | Indicator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of territories where a short circuits approach has been adopted by local authorities in non-agricultural sectors in 2022 (Output 2). - Number of additional territories where the short circuits approach has been replicated until 2024 (Output 2). | |
| | Baseline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0 - 0 | |
| | End Target | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 territories. - 10 territories. | |
| | Comments and follow-up action to be taken | <p>The outcome was partially achieved. A short circuits approach was promoted in the six targeted territories, specifically with the previously identified local associations/groups of rural women producers, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grupo Andorinhas (craftwork) – Batalha, state of Piauí. - Cooperativa de associações de Quebradeiras e Quebradores de Coco Babaçu (preparation of meals and craftwork) – Imperatriz, state of Maranhão. - Grupo de Mulheres Renascer (food preparation, extractive activities) – Goiás, state of Goiás. - Associação Guardiões da Serra do Quilombo de Raiz, Apanhadoras de Flores Sempre-Vivas (flower gatherers) – Serra do Espinhaço, state of Minas Gerais. - Grupos de mulheres dos assentamentos que formam a cooperativa Coopceta (natural medicine and family farming) - Ibirapitanga, state of Bahia. - Grupo de mulheres do Assentamento Tiradentes – Baraúna, state of Rio Grande do Norte. <p>However, given that the project had finished recently, the government counterpart had not yet had the time to continue with the approach in other territories. After the elaboration of the final report, FAO will formally present the results to the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Family Farming and consult with the ministry to ascertain whether activities can be replicated with the support of the government.</p> | |
| Output 1 | Rapid assessments of the impact of COVID-19 in six targeted territories, designed and conducted | | |
| | Indicators | Target | Achieved |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of assessment questionnaires, with the most relevant socio-economic requirements, designed and validated through consultation with stakeholders. - Response rate to the assessment interviews carried out with technical assistance of FAO. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 - 2% | Yes |
| Baseline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0 - 0 | | |
| Comments | The socioeconomic mapping of the six groups was fully conducted by 13 November 2023, through a Letter of Agreement with FEALQ. | | |
| Activity 1.1 | Liaise with municipalities' governments and local leaderships | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| Activity 1.2 | Comments | The project coordination contacted every local government and group leadership before starting activities on the field and sent information on the TCP project to promote ownership to local stakeholders. | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| Activity 1.3 | Comments | The project coordination met with the technical team that conducted the mapping/assessment, and capacitated them on FAO's Policy on Gender Equality and on Environmental and Social Safeguards to guarantee an adequate approach with the rural groups. | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| Activity 1.3 | Comments | FEALQ carried out a total of 40 interviews with the six rural women groups. | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |

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| Activity 1.4 | Diagnose territories | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | Each group diagnosis came with an analysis of the territory. | |
| Activity 1.5 | Prepare final report | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | The final report comparing the main findings of each group was presented on November 20, 2023. | |
| Output 2 | Technical assistance provided to the government to promote the adoption and implementation of nonagricultural short circuits recommendations in order to benefit local producer associations | | |
| | Indicators | Target | Achieved |
| | - A methodology on short circuits approach in non-agricultural sectors, formulated and validated through consultation with stakeholders and presented to the target communities and the government for their endorsement. - Number of federal and local government entities technically supported to adopt the short-circuits approach to benefit local producer associations. | - 1 methodological guide. - 8 entities (2 federal and 6 local). | Partially |
| | Baseline | - 0 - 0 | |
| Comments | The methodology was successfully developed and systematized in a product delivered by a consultant. Not every local government engaged in the execution of activities. In those cases, the project strategy was to invert the implementation logic and develop the capacity of groups/associations first and then try a new engagement with the municipalities. The upscaling of municipal actions after the project terminated would be sought through a joint effort between FAO and the federal government. | | |
| Activity 2.1 | Liaise with municipalities' governments and local leaderships | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | The project team contacted every local government and group leadership to inform them on the intervention and invite them to actively participate and ensure local ownership. | |
| Activity 2.2 | Liaise with stakeholders to define recommendations | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | Each group was contacted more than once. | |
| Activity 2.3 | Conduct consultation workshops with target populations | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | Before starting the capacitation sessions, the project team organized a round of two online formal workshops and one informal consultation with each group to define how to address the needs by FEALQ during the socioeconomic diagnoses. The formal workshops consisted of two-hour sessions in which the project consultants discussed with representatives from each group the format and topics to be seen during the in-person training. The informal consultation consisted of logistic aspects to be considered. In the formal and informal sessions, an average of three participants from each association/group were present. | |
| Activity 2.4 | Elaborate a methodological guide | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | The national specialist on rural short circuits developed a draft methodological guide after gathering inputs from two formal consultations with the groups/associations, validating the findings from the socioeconomic diagnoses carried out by FEALQ. With those elements, and after systematizing the discussions and conclusions from the in-person trainings, the consultant prepared the final version of the methodological guide. | |
| Activity 2.5 | Capacitate local associations | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | The six groups/associations were capacitated by the project on two occasions, once via an on-site course for sustainable rural businesses (Rural Commerce enterprise), in which basic elements and concepts of rural businesses, such as structure, product, marketing, price estimation, legislation, and trade were presented and discussed. The second round of in-person trainings was conducted by the national specialist on rural short circuits and the national specialist on partnerships. This second round was focused on dealing with production bottlenecks identified by each group/association and in giving recommendations for increasing productivity within the groups' limitations. | |

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| Output 3 | A guide on establishing Public Private Partnerships (PPP), with a focus on generating job opportunities, new sources of income for the population and promote digitalization of their products, involving associations/cooperatives, women and young people, elaborated and validated in the seven target territories | | |
| | Indicators | Target | Achieved |
| | - A guide on establishing PPP elaborated and validated through a pilot of creating/strengthening associations at the territory level. - Number of local government technicians trained in how to use the manual. - Number of associations strengthened in each of the seven target territories that increased their bargaining know-how and increased their private sector network. | - 1 PPP guide. - 12 (two per territory). - 6 (1 per territory). | Partially |
| Baseline | - 0 - 0 - 0 | | |
| Comments | Output 3 was delivered almost completely. The PPP guide was elaborated, and the six groups/associations were capacitated on the recommendations from the manual. However, only six government technicians were trained. | | |
| Activity 3.1 | Identify private enterprises | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | The partnerships consultant started to identify potential private sector partners for the groups but after assessing the groups limited commercial capabilities diverted its efforts to capacitate the groups on basic elements of associations, cooperatives and trade concepts. | |
| Activity 3.2 | Organize a seminar on public-private partnerships and meetings | | |
| | Achieved | No | |
| | Comments | The groups schedules did not allow time for this final delivery. Onsite activities with each group were conducted by the partnerships consultant to share the basic knowledge that the PPP guide addresses. | |
| Activity 3.3 | Organize business meetings to expand job opportunities | | |
| | Achieved | No | |
| | Comments | The lack of consistent know-how and sufficient productive capacities led to the intervention taking a step back and focusing on reinforcing the basics of rural commercialization with the targeted groups. | |
| Activity 3.4 | Publish Public Private Partnerships (PPP) guide | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | The guide was prepared as the final delivery of the partnerships consultant. | |

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| Output 4 | Technical assistance provided to local association/communities to identify and promote the adoption of digital applications and solutions to leverage the commercialization of non-agricultural items in addition to traditional sale channels like local markets and fairs | | |
| | Indicators | Target | Achieved |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of relevant digital applications identified for improving the supply and demand trends of the products. - A “how to” guide on the use of digital applications for marketing by rural small producers including good practices identified elaborated and validated. - Number of demonstrations on the use of digital applications and identified solutions conducted in each territory. - Percentage of local women and men trained to use the identified application. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 - 1 - 6 - 50 % of women and 50 % of men. | Yes |
| Baseline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 | | |
| Comments | The output was adapted after the diagnosis of the groups conducted by FEALQ. Instead of focusing on capacity-building activities to enhance the proficiency of the rural producers with digital applications for marketing their products, the project team agreed with the Lead Technical Officer and the groups leaderships on the preparation and teaching of a sustainable rural enterprises course to develop basic elements of rural businesses that the groups were lacking. The course was successfully conducted in each of the groups’ headquarters. | | |
| Activity 4.1 | Map potentially useful digital marketing applications | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | One of the rural businesses course modules was entirely dedicated to identifying the most suitable digital tools for leveraging the groups production. | |
| Activity 4.2 | Conduct feasibility tests | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | The course delivered on basic elements of rural businesses, identification of bottlenecks and gaps to an efficient production, plus covered marketing scenarios in which digital applications could be used for improving the commercialization dynamics of the enterprises. | |
| Activity 4.3 | Elaborate “how to” guide | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | All teaching materials are available for the groups and local governments use, adoption and adaptation to other enterprises and realities. | |
| Activity 4.4 | Conduct capacitation workshops on the app use | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | The final module of the sustainable rural enterprises covered the identification and use of digital applications by rural businesses. | |

| Systematization of experiences and dissemination of results | | | |
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| | Indicators | Target | Achieved |
| Output 5 | - A methodology on short circuits approach in non-agricultural sectors, formulated and validated through consultation with stakeholders and presented to the target communities and the government for their endorsement. - Number of federal and local government entities technically supported to adopt the short-circuits approach to benefit local producer associations. | - 1 methodological guide. - 8 entities (2 federal and 6 local). | Partially |
| Baseline | - 0 - 0 | | |
| Comments | The methodology was fully developed and tested with the rural women groups. However, it is necessary to follow up with local governments to promote the adoption of the project's approach within their institutionality to further support the benefited groups. For the continuity of this approach the federal government will be consulted and invited to prepare a second round of interventions that promote a short circuits approach for non-agricultural rural women groups. | | |
| Activity 5.1 | Formulate communication plan | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | The diffusion of the project activities and results was discussed and planned with the FAO Brazil communication consultant. | |
| Activity 5.2 | Systematize the experience into a methodological guide | | |
| | Achieved | Yes | |
| | Comments | The national specialist on rural short circuits systematized the methodology of the capacity-building approach with each group/association in her final product. | |
| Activity 5.3 | Systematize and formulate a roadmap for scaling-up | | |
| | Achieved | No | |
| | Comments | Some delays in the final activities of the project did not allow for the project team to develop a roadmap for upscaling the intervention. This could be jointly prepared with the government counterpart when presenting the main results of the project. | |
| Activity 5.4 | Present the project results | | |
| | Achieved | No | |
| | Comments | The project results will be formally presented to the government counterpart along with the terminal report and the package of products developed during the project. | |

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

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