

Project Evaluation Series

[06/2024](#)

# Terminal evaluation of the project “Sustainable Land Management and Climate-friendly Agriculture”

Project code: GCP/TUR/055/GFF  
GEF ID: 4583

Follow-up report

Terminal evaluation of the project “Sustainable Land Management and Climate-friendly Agriculture” – Follow-up report					07/2024
Evaluation recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted,</b> <b>Partially accepted</b> <b>or</b> <b>Rejected</b>	Management plan			
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<b>Actions to follow up or reinforce initial project benefits</b>					
<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b></p> <p><i>Operational:</i> The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry should develop an overarching monitoring programme that integrates all three project components in order to assess systematically the KCB’s environmental state.</p> <p>An overarching, integrated monitoring scheme in the basin – and ideally nationwide – should be developed to overcome policy integration challenges that the project started addressing successfully. An integrated water basin management approach and strategic environmental impact assessments can ensure that further expansion of agricultural surface area in the basin and its encroachment on not only freshwater aquifers, but also traditional landscapes are avoided. The defined strategic targets within the Biodiversity Management Plan developed as a result of the project, including pastures, wetlands, protected areas, agricultural areas, and forests in the KCB should be used.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>The recommendations are noted. Recommendations for a comprehensive monitoring scheme have been made to the Ministry by FAO through the project activities, also providing directions in this regard. These recommendations will further be reinforced and conveyed to the Ministry as an outcome of this report. At present,</p> <p>Monitoring studies regarding the species and specialized areas determined within the scope of the “National Biological Diversity Inventory and Monitoring Project” are carried out by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks. (GDNCNP) are continuing to monitor biodiversity through its Konya and Karaman Provincial Branches.</p> <p>This work also serves the implementation of Biodiversity Management Plan and monitoring concept developed by the project.</p> <p>Monitoring studies are also carried out within the scope of Species Action Plans prepared by GDNCNP and the project.</p>	<p>The monitoring and evaluation studies are regularly carried out by the relevant institutions under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change (MEUCC).</p> <p>Specifically, the General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion under MEUCC together with FAO has developed Decision Support System to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality in Türkiye. Desertification Monitoring System and Carbon Stock Monitoring System are also in use to conduct monitoring and evaluation of the terrestrial areas across the country. General Directorate of Forestry under MAF has also a built-in Forest Information System to monitor all activities conducted in forested lands across the country.</p> <p>Monitoring studies regarding the species and specialized areas are carried out by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks under MAF are regularly</p>	Good	

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			<p>conducted based on their annual workplan.</p> <p>Inventory studies have been completed within the scope of the 'National Biodiversity Inventory and Monitoring Project', which was launched in two thousand thirteen in order to reveal Türkiye's biological diversity within the scope of national legislation and the international conventions to which Türkiye is a party, and monitoring studies are carried out throughout the country.</p> <p>Currently, 194 flora, 111 fauna (mammals, birds, fishes, amphibians, reptiles) and 45 specialized areas are monitored. Biodiversity monitoring studies are conducted through scientific methodologies determined for each species and specialized area by personnel of provincial organization and/or academicians.</p> <p>A total of 21 species and specialized areas, including some of the species to be monitored proposed in this project, were monitored in Konya and Karaman provinces in 2023.</p>		

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<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b></p> <p><i>Strategic:</i> FAO should advocate the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to put in place concrete policy response measures against the urgent environmental extremes in the KCB. From the governmental perspective, intra-ministerial and intra-departmental cohesion efforts should be mobilised to achieve policy integration between agriculture and pasture management and biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>FAO should encourage the main project partners to tackle the core of the freshwater management issues in the KCB. Establishing economic incentives for farmers to gradually cease the production of freshwater dependent crops regionally; or, reversely, the use of fees or penalties in not abiding to do so can be among these instruments. Furthermore, technical know-how generated throughout the project (especially experiences gained in maintaining and increasing soil fertility via conservation agriculture) ought to feed more high-level public policy measures, such as the “Basin Based Agricultural Subsidy Scheme” recently established in</p>	<b>Partially accepted</b>	The recommendations are noted. Water issue in the region is extremely important but at the same time is a politically sensitive issue. As suggested FAO can provide only technical support and policy advise where possible. Need for incentives for conservation agriculture practices have been referred for a number of areas. These recommendations will further be reinforced and conveyed to the Ministry as an outcome of this report.	<p>FAO has been developing the following GEF project with the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change (MEUCC) and Konya Municipality, MAF, on the reuse of wastewater and sledge in agriculture.</p> <p>The project is titled as Increasing the Soil Quality and Carbon Sequestration Capacity of Soil by Using Wastewater Treatment Plants to Eliminate Land Degradation and Combat Climate Change, which its objective is improve soil quality and resilience in the Konya region by application of treated sludge from existing wastewater treatment facilities. This project aims to reverse soil degradation and enhance carbon sequestration capabilities, contributing to climate change mitigation and advancing Türkiye's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets. Hence the project will build on the results of the GCP/TUR/055 project and will develop policy framework for the reuse of treated wastewater and sledge in agriculture to enhance carbon sequestration capacity of soil and will</p>	Advancing	

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<p>Türkiye, determining which crops are to be subsidised in which water basin based on various groundwater and precipitation data.</p> <p>Furthermore, as a consequence of overlapping responsibilities of project lead agencies regarding pasture and steppe management, intra-ministerial and intra-departmental cohesion efforts should be mobilised to achieve policy integration between agriculture and pasture management and biodiversity conservation, which need to be evaluated through a set of agreed, common indicators across various general directorates.</p>			<p>adopt new innovative solution to water scarcity in the driest district, Karapinar of KCB. Within the context of the project, roles and responsibilities of the institutions will be reviewed in terms of reuse of treated wastewater and sledge in agriculture and ecological applications. The policy framework will be strengthened.</p>		
<p><b>Recommendation 3.</b></p> <p><i>Operational:</i> The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and FAO should continue and spread the Farmer Field School (FFS) model with the collaboration of the local and regional agricultural authorities and through private sector engagement in the KCB, and also on national level.</p> <p>The FFS model should be replicated across the whole basin (and nationwide) by strategically prioritising and targeting the</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>Farmer Field School model has been an effective approach for capacity building and extension purposes. This will certainly be followed in the region and in other parts of the country, especially on the climate change related activities. However, it was noted that implementation is relatively costly compared to other approaches, thus some minor modifications may be considered to adopt the approach for the local conditions and specific cases. In addition, the rapid development of technology and communication, the rapid dissemination of information on the internet, and</p>	<p>Farmer field schools are implemented in the field by Provincial Directorates of Agriculture and Forestry on different subjects such as combating plant diseases and pests, breeding techniques in animal husbandry. However, changing technology and reluctance to the innovative approaches sometimes make the practice difficult. To overcome this, e.g. since young farmers mostly follow social media and digital platforms and</p>	Advancing	<p>In order to transfer the results of farmer field schools to digital platforms, Provincial Directorates of Agriculture &amp; Forest produces digital content and publishes them from time to time. The digital accounts of</p>

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areas of concern (i.e. in terms of biodiversity), water scarcity, or other key factors learnt from the project). On-farm response capacities to climate change should thus be continued to be strengthened with multi-party collaborations engaging the local and regional agricultural directorates as well as the private sector. <sup>1</sup>		the better use of the internet by young farmers is an issue that needs to be reviewed for the future of farmer field schools. By transferring farmer field school practices to digital platforms, it can be ensured to increase their effectiveness and dissemination. In this regard, the best practices in the field by the public and private sectors and the results and practices of the work carried out at the level of farmer field schools are shared on digital platforms. In addition, the public (Ministry and provincial organizations) prioritize projects and studies with different projects, especially water use, biological diversity and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.	follow innovative extension methods, publications and information are disseminated through Provincial/District Directorates accounts on social media and digital platforms.  FFSs have been disseminated at national level through the projects implemented by FAO and Ministries based on the results of GCP/TUR/055 Project.		provincial directorates allow farmers to comment, share experience and problems encountered about the published content. Hence, the usability and importance of digital platforms is increasing day by day, as they can reach more people and are cost effective.

<sup>1</sup> Private initiatives in the KCB are represented through several agricultural development cooperatives and unions – such as Irrigation Unions, Agricultural Production Cooperatives, Agricultural Credit Cooperatives, and Sugar Beet Cultivator Unions. As mainly serving members to boost agricultural production and provide extension services for farm development, these cooperatives represent the beneficiaries and were an important part of the baseline of the project.

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<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p><i>Operational, targeting LNOB:</i> The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Provincial Directorates should develop a specific operating model for the fair use, sharing, and distribution of agricultural machinery procured during project implementation.</p> <p>In order to facilitate the wide use of the agricultural machinery, and in particular the no-till machines in the KCB, a specific operating model for their fair use, sharing, and distribution is of outmost importance. This model should ideally also define the parties responsible for their upkeep and maintenance. Farmers renting them for a nominal fee is one possibility, which would assure that farmers return the machines promptly and also provide resources for the maintenance of the machines. If the rent is high enough, this might also provide resources to purchase more machines. This type of operating model should be solidified with the involvement of district and provincial agricultural authorities, local chambers of agriculture, GDAR, and FAO.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>The recommended model was recommended to the Ministry institutions, and these are followed to a large extent. Particularly the locally procured manure spreading machines were used effectively by renting out to the farmers with a reasonable fee. This was followed also for the no till drills.</p> <p>At present, Konya and Karaman Provincial Directorates of Agriculture and Forestry are currently implementing the use of machines in accordance with the recommendation. Existing machines are kept in the machine park of the District Directorate and are followed by personnel assigned by the Directorate. All farmers who need machines can benefit from the service unconditionally. Farmers use a bank account opened by the District Governorships or themselves in the district by paying the daily or hourly usage fee over the fees determined at the beginning of the year. The collected fees are used for the maintenance and repair and depreciation of the machines.</p> <p>Since the Provincial Directorates of Agriculture and Forestry are public institutions, there are sometimes problems in the control and effective operation of the machines. On the other hand, it is thought that the machines may have more beneficial results if they are transferred to the Chambers of Agriculture or Unions, rented from</p>	<p>Provincial Directorates of MAF have developed a model for the use of the machines purchased within the scope of the GCP/TUR/055 project to disseminate conservation agricultural practices and ensure that agricultural machinery have been used by farmers for years.</p> <p>In this context, the equipment purchased within the scope of the project was transferred to farmer organizations and cooperatives for certain periods of time through the prepared protocols, thus, effective use and operability of the machines have been ensured and the machines have been made available to farmers</p>	Good	<p>As a result of the protocols made with cooperatives and farmer organizations regarding the use of these machines, the long-term use of the machines will be guaranteed.</p> <p>In this context, a significant convenience will be provided for farmers to use the machines purchased in the project.</p>

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		these, and offered to the use of the farmers and followed up. In addition, it will be beneficial to allow the machines purchased in FAO or GEF-sourced project works to be transferred to the Chambers of Agriculture or Unions to be used by the farmers more quickly and to be used from the beginning of the project.			
<p><b>Recommendation 5.</b></p> <p><i>Strategic:</i> FAO should develop more sustainable communication strategies and reinforce communication tools to make the project more visible and leverage substantial change through increased public awareness and demonstration of transformative practices.</p> <p>A comprehensive communication strategy was not implemented throughout the project. The multiplier effect of successful and transformative practices, such as sustainable land management (SLM), rangeland restoration, and conservation agriculture practices, should be disseminated through much stronger communication tools (i.e. an internet-based knowledge management system, such as a website or a portal for making materials easily accessible, news pieces, short films, public service announcements,</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	In the first years of the project, especially technical studies were carried out and the important outputs of the project on sustainable land management in the last years were introduced with a media field visit. In addition, the press releases were prepared and shared with the local press that all the actions carried out within the scope of the project shared on the FAO Türkiye website and Twitter account. The two project videos were prepared. One includes the results obtained from the project and the other includes studies on biological diversity. these videos are shown to the participants in the trainings made by the project partners. Within the completion of the project, the reports published as important outputs will be uploaded to the FAO publication system and become an FAO publication, increasing the awareness of the project in international level.	<p>The visibility materials prepared for the farmers and women to create an awareness of the project activities have been disseminated through social media, Ministries’ and farmers’ TV channels.</p> <p>The success stories prepared during the implementation of the project has been shared through Ministries’ website and digital platforms. The outputs of the project are used of FAO GEF program in Türkiye. The outputs of this project have been explained in press interviews with FAO, and best practices, especially in FFS and irrigation, will serve as an example in the fight against drought and climate change at national level.</p>	Advancing	

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documentaries in various media, and social media networks) as part of the exit strategy. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry operates an agricultural TV channel and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the project partner Nature Conservation Centre (DKM), have strong social media presence. These tools should be used to disseminate demonstration results more widely and to leverage for substantial and lasting change, not only on local, but also on regional and national level.					
<b>Proposals for future directions</b>					
<p><b>Recommendation 6.</b></p> <p><i>Strategic:</i> FAO should set clearer standards of conservation agriculture (CA) in training materials.</p> <p>The project's training/educational materials (i.e. brochures and curricula targeting the farmers) recommend as a usual practice the use of pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilisers without making sufficient effort on the promotion of more nature-based solutions to improve soil conditions. A "business as usual"-approach to agriculture underlines the</p>	<b>Partially accepted</b>	Conservation agriculture is a complex concept, and it is not easy to change practices rapidly as a whole at once. For the introduction of the direct sowing practice, which is a major change in production system, a step-by-step approach was followed. Through this approach, feasibility of no tillage sowing has been demonstrated effectively by changing only the sowing and weed control method. To improve soil conditions, benefits of legume crops in rotation systems have been demonstrated and Hungarian vetch seeds were distributed to farmers. Now that these practices have been introduced, more focus can be given to refinement and upscaling of these techniques with	As a best practice of GCP/TUR/055 Project, planting of forage crops with no-tillage in farmers' field is supported through different projects, and this activity contributes to reducing the pressure of overgrazing on pastures in the region.  The results of the project and best practices are used for training farmers in the region and other part of the country through projects implemented by FAO and MAF.	Advancing	

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tone of these guidelines specifically designed for the KCB. The Subregional Office for Central Asia as a Subregional Office, responsible for providing guidance and advocacy, should reinforce the upholding of more holistic, sustainable standards for soil and biodiversity conservation and strongly encourage these instead. <sup>2</sup>		a more comprehensive approach in subsequent activities in the region and beyond. The recommendations will be taken into account in formulation of future similar project activities.			
<p><b>Recommendation 7.</b></p> <p><i>Operational:</i> FAO should integrate gender equality concerns at the project’s design stage, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry shall prioritise and engage for gender-transformative approaches in their work plans.</p> <p>Closing the gender gap in agriculture is essential to fulfil FAO’s mandate and to overcome the “persistent gender inequalities that undermine rural women’s potential”.<sup>3</sup> This policy holds FAO</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>FAO developed a gender action plan that intends to address gender-related issues identified in the project, to ensure gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the project.</p> <p>GAP is intended to propose a range of actions that encompass</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. policy changes at the national level;</li> <li>ii. institutional strengthening; and</li> <li>iii. changes at the local level through gender-responsive rural projects.</li> </ol> <p>These actions intend to address priority gender considerations in the agricultural sector and</p>	Rural women’s and men’s ability to adapt to the climatic changes threatening their food security at household and community levels depends on their access to resources and responsible agricultural practices. However, women face additional difficulties when it comes to accessing financial resources, capacity-building activities, and technologies, and experience greater restrictions on their rights, mobility, and ability to shape intra-household decisions. In	Advancing	The project introduced and implemented the Farmer Field School model, which was tested for the first time in Türkiye. It was designed specifically to encourage women and men farmers to improve production by sustaining

<sup>2</sup> See also: FAO. 2019. *The International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilisers*. Rome. and FAO and WHO. 2014. *The International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management*. Rome.

<sup>3</sup> FAO. 2020. *Policy on Gender Equality 2020–2030*, page v. Rome.

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accountable for systematically integrating gender equality as a priority in its strategic framework and related implementation mechanisms. Even though a Gender Action Plan was prepared by the project, actively seeking to redress unequal power dynamics by challenging the discriminatory social norms, behaviours, and attitudes in the KCB, the gender gap has not been addressed sufficiently; rather, actions have been formulated towards income-generation objectives to women beneficiaries in selected pilot areas. It is recommended that income-generation is not equated with gender empowerment in future work and projects conducted through GEF funding. Gender inequality reduction should therefore be a critical part of project design and implementation. However, participation alone will not be sufficient to ensure women’s needs, as the overall objective should aim to enhance women’s leadership and decision-making power at all levels, also with regard to their involvement in legal framework, policy, and programme formulation.		<p>establish strategic alliances between different government institutions, NGOs, and women’s groups.</p> <p>Considering the role of women as farmers in rural areas, it is important for women farmers to access and receive training to improve their agricultural skills through agricultural extension services and to improve their living conditions.</p> <p>Gender action plan activities has been understood within this project as improvements in women’s personal capacities, self-confidence, and capacity for overcoming challenges, women’s solidarity and being organized, women’s opportunities for participating into decision making and the development of women’s gender roles.</p> <p>Our study showed that women living in rural areas undertake responsibility in every stage of agricultural production in addition to housework, wife, and motherhood duties.</p> <p>Research results indicate that rural women play an important role, particularly in animal husbandry, vegetable production, and food marketing activities. Our study showed that the workload of rural women was very heavy.</p> <p>Women’s participation in decisions at all stages of production is low. It was deemed important for them to participate in the decision-making process,</p>	<p>addition to this, women tend to be underrepresented at all levels of decision-making on climate change. All of these factors often stand in the way of women’s general empowerment and their role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Following all these reasons, since 2015, FAO Türkiye and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry have been working together to improve pasture and forestland use management through the adoption of low-carbon technologies and by addressing issues related to gender-sensitive sustainable land management, biodiversity conservation, and climate change in the Konya Closed Basin. The project has established a Farmer Field School (FFS) model designed specifically to empower farmers to become better informed regarding steps they can take to improve production, maintain ecosystem integrity, and reduce the long-term economic risks associated with degradation. This model is interwoven throughout all project components, using the various</p>		<p>ecosystems and reducing the long-term economic risks associated with degradation. This model offers a set of practical field exercises using direct observation, discussion and decision-making: in sum, learning-by-doing. It also addresses the specific needs and vulnerabilities of both women and men.</p> <p>At the outset of the project, the implementing partners were informed about the FFS model, the criteria for women’s inclusion were established and the</p>

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		<p>to develop their capacities and to have the competence to implement their decisions.</p> <p>Vulnerable groups among poor women especially; the elderly, unemployed, sick and disabled, widowed and divorced, landless and small landowners and lonely people constitute priority groups.</p> <p>It is considered important for them to learn to use technical tools used in agricultural work.</p> <p>It seems important to ensure that they acquire new skills and thus earn income.</p> <p>Their inclusion in the social insurance system is a priority issue.</p> <p>It seems important to generate sustainable income sources.</p> <p>They do not want to keep young people in rural areas. On the one hand, this increases the workload of women, on the other hand, it causes old age and care problems. In this context, the old age of the rural woman should be put on the agenda as an important issue.</p> <p>Depending on the proposed outcomes, outputs and activities of the GAP, in order to decrease gender inequalities in rural areas, agriculture we should ensure women’s access to services, rights and opportunities:</p>	<p>investments as a way to strengthen the knowledge base of local resource users and government extension officers. The FFS model provides a conduit for the continued delivery of learning between government staff and farmers. One of the keys aims of the project is to improve the livelihoods of female farmers in rural areas. In this context, a socioeconomic analysis was conducted at the project sites and a Gender Action Plan (GAP) was developed to support effective land management and climate-friendly agriculture initiatives in the basin.</p> <p>To ensure the inclusion of gender equality principles into climate-friendly agriculture, the project, at the design stage, generated an understanding of both female and male farmers’ practices using a socioeconomic analysis approach. This analysis considered perceptions of existing gender relations within the social context, gender roles in decision-making including around the adoption of technology, the types of</p>		<p>relevant actions were designed.</p> <p>The first FFSs were established in the project and with the participation of both male and female farmers, today women farmers benefit from this model in the region and other parts of the country through projects implementing FFSs.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Gender should be mainstreamed in farming practices among the local community, institutions, and decision-makers.</li> <li>ii. Women’s access to knowledge and resources, services and markets should be improved;</li> <li>iii. Women’s solidarity and representation in decision-making bodies should be improved to integrate the needs and opportunities of women and decreasing their burden of work.</li> <li>iv. Gender mainstreaming should be continued.</li> </ul>	<p>farming practices used and women’s specific roles in the production system.</p> <p>The findings informed the development of the Gender Action Plan 2021 to support the government in eliminating persistent gender imbalances in the agriculture sector and to better mitigate climate change through providing the relevant gender sensitization and training, mobilizing adequate resources to support smallholders to increase their use of land in agricultural activities, and improving food security, income, health, and environmental sustainability.</p>		
<p><b>Recommendation 8.</b></p> <p><i>Operational:</i> FAO should enhance procurement planning and provide procurement support at an early stage of project implementation in order to minimise administrative hurdles and to expedite the process.</p> <p>Procurement and contract hurdles within the FAO system has led to a high staff turnover throughout the whole project</p>	<b>Partially accepted</b>	In the administrative structure of the Subregional Office for Central Asia, procurement unit is centralized by providing services to all projects and programme. The unit consists of experienced and continuous staff which facilitates the operations. In terms of planning, procurement unit had been put on the loop from the beginning by providing procurement plans twice a year considering the timelines required to implement procurement requests. As per overall procurement cycle in the project timeline it may be recommended to plan	Several training courses have been delivered by the Procurement Unit to FAO-SEC/FETUR staff on how to do the procurement planning and timelines to be adhered to according to FAO procurement cycle. The recommendations on project procurement planning with regards to the lessons learned was raised to the attention of senior management to	Good	

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implementation period, which in turn caused a number of delays. The project’s design and work plans did not sufficiently take into account administrative hurdles within FAO, which significantly impacted timely implementation of activities and, in some cases, led to project ownership issues. To enhance procurement planning and to identify potential risks, the Subregional Office for Central Asia as well as FAO headquarters should provide mutual support with appropriate measures to be taken and allow some extra time for the implementation of planned activities.		the complex procurements which may require the longer duration to deliver services (considering logistics arrangements, installations etc.) at the earlier stages of the project.	take into consideration in the upcoming projects.		

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