BSI Standards Publication

Tourism and related services — Tourist services for public use provided by Natural Protected Areas Authorities — Requirements

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National foreword

This British Standard is the UK implementation of ISO 18065:2015.

The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted to Technical Committee SVS/2, Tourism services.

A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

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This British Standard was published under the authority of the Standards Policy and Strategy Committee on 31 March 2015.

Amendments/corrigenda issued since publication

Date	Text affected

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO

18065

First edition
2015-03-01

Tourism and related services — Tourist services for public use provided by Natural Protected Areas Authorities — Requirements

Tourisme et services connexes — Services touristiques publics délivrés par les autorités des espaces naturels protégés — Exigences

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

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For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see the following URL: Foreword — Supplementary information.

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 228, *Tourism and related services*.

Introduction

Natural Protected Areas (NPA) are created to preserve and conserve the endemic features, cultural heritage, and ambience of a specified area for the enjoyment of both present and future generations.

The initiative for setting up protected areas is no longer coming only or even mainly from the government.

NPA Authorities (NPAA) are responsible for ensuring the efficient and sustainable planning and development of tourist services conforming to legal requirements. Risk assessments promote the safety of the visitor and quality assessment of services mitigates impacts upon NPA's wildlife, flora, fauna, and communities.

When appropriately managed, tourist activities in NPA allow visitors to experience the natural environment and to learn about the importance of nature conservation at the same time.

Protected areas are established primarily to preserve some type of biophysical process or condition such as a wildlife population, habitat, natural landscape (including abiotic nature), or cultural heritage such as a community's cultural tradition.

Public use, tourism, and recreation can be part of the objectives of a NPA. Tourists visit them for their own enjoyment and, in doing so, benefit from understanding and appreciation of the values on which the area was established.

Tourism to NPA has grown and is now a significant element in the culture of modern society. Protected areas are very attractive settings for the growing demand for outdoor appreciative activities in natural environments.

Through public use management processes, NPAA hold responsibility for ensuring that while visitors have opportunities to participate in their desired activities, they are aware of and uphold the NPA values. That is the objective of this International Standard.

Tourism and related services — Tourist services for public use provided by Natural Protected Areas Authorities — Requirements

1   Scope

This International Standard establishes the requirements for tourist services provided directly by NPAA in order to satisfy visitors while giving priority to the NPA conservation objectives, excluding the marine protected areas.

NOTE   These NPAs can be publicly or privately managed, managed by the community or by NGO, or managed by a mixture of some or all of these possibilities.

2   Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 7001, *Graphical symbols — Public information symbols*

3   Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1
carrying capacity
measure that addresses the question of how many visitors can be permitted into an area in any specific time, taking into account, at least, the risk of degrading the site, its physical capacity, and the visitors' experience

Note 1 to entry: These desirable limits measure the types and levels of sustainable use.

3.2
controlled camping area
defined geographical space with provision of services where people can pitch a tent for periods of time defined by NPAA and in which cleaning services are provided

3.3
information point
facility providing visitors with information and warnings to assist them in getting around the area

Note 1 to entry: Information points can be staffed (with attendants providing information) or unstaffed (only with information panel, brochures, etc.).

3.4
interpretation activities
visitor management tool that develops awareness and understanding of the NPA's cultural and natural environments and heightens recreation experiences and visitor satisfaction

Note 1 to entry: Interpretation activities stimulate visitors to learn and gain more appreciation of the values for which the NPA was established. Examples of interpretation activities are trail sight signs, field guides, guided walks or tours, interactive displays.

3.5
marked trail
signposted path or track made across the NPA to direct walking and trekking activities (on foot, by bicycle, on horseback, or by other means accepted by NPAA)

3.6
natural protected area
NPA
clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated, and managed through legal means or other types of efficient means to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values

3.7
natural protected area authority
NPAA
organization that has the responsibility of planning and managing the NPA

Note 1 to entry: It can provide services to visitors and manage facilities for public use.

3.8
nature workshop
seminar or course that provides education for participants to learn about nature, particularly flora and fauna and/or specific natural environments

Note 1 to entry: Specific infrastructure designed for educational aims, heritage interpretation, or contact with nature can be provided.

Note 2 to entry: Workshops can take place indoors or outdoors.

3.9
public use
programs, services, activities, and facilities provided within the protected area by the NPAA in order to bring the visitors closer to its natural and cultural values in a safe and ordered manner that guarantees the conservation, understanding, and appreciation of said values through information, education, and interpretation of the patrimony

3.10
public use services
attention provided specifically to individuals or groups of individuals to facilitate activities of public use

Note 1 to entry: Support of specific facilities and/or specialized personnel is usually required, although in some cases, operation can proceed without these requirements.

3.11
recreational area
adapted space used for enjoyment and leisure in a safe and convenient way

Note 1 to entry: Recreational areas are usually available with basic services provided such as cleaning services, tables and seats and, in some cases, also opportunities for visitors to purchase goods.

Note 2 to entry: This limited area can accommodate a broad range of education, outdoor recreation opportunities, and related facilities in ways that respect the natural landscape.

3.12
refuge
roofed structure created for shelter, rest, or an overnight stay for one or several days, generally used in relation to complicated itineraries

Note 1 to entry: Refuges can either be manufactured or part of the natural landscape.

Note 2 to entry: Refuges can be staffed and unstaffed.

3.13
visitor
person using the NPA for outdoor recreation and enjoyment of its natural and cultural values

Note 1 to entry: It includes international and domestic visitors.

3.14
wildlife exhibit
designated, controlled area where visitors are offered the opportunity to observe wildlife

Note 1 to entry: Physical barriers can be used to separate visitors from the species being viewed. Equipment for investigation of fauna to develop education or interpretative activities can be provided.

3.15
zoning
land-use planning process designed to manage the permitted uses and activities in an NPA

4 Approaches for public use

4.1 General

NPAA shall develop a policy and establish the criteria to evaluate the suitability of tourism activities, access and transportation by land, water, or air, taking into account the NPA's resources, values, and conservation objectives.

NOTE   These criteria can consider low impact, non-consumptive activities; promote education, and include small groups' activities.

NPAA shall provide guidelines for tourism and recreation activities and communicate these to the public.

NPAA shall define minimum level requirements for environmental performance of public use services and facilities.

Accessibility principles should be considered when establishing conditions to service provision and facilities (see Annex A).

4.2 Public use plan

NPAA shall establish and document a public use plan. Stakeholder consultation should be considered. This plan shall address the conservation, understanding, and appreciation of natural and cultural values through information, education, and interpretation of the patrimony and shall minimize the potential impacts generated by tourism.

NOTE 1   A public use plan can be called by different title. It can be one document or a series of documents.

The public use plan shall include the following:

a)   public use zoning scheme;

b)   monitoring of environmental impacts;

c)   carrying capacity;

d)   maximum number of visitors for facilities;

e)   criteria to evaluate the suitability of tourism activities;

f)   activities permitted and prohibited;

g)   expected, suggested, and prohibited visitor behaviours;

h)   recreation management and facilities (staffed or unstaffed);

i)   use, information, and interpretation of visitors´ experience and visitors´ profile (such as surveys, questionnaires, etc.);

j)   accessibility considerations;

k)   safety;

l)   waste, cleaning, and maintenance;

m)   outsourcing;

n)   information and communication.

NOTE 2   NPAA can use these different approaches to monitor impacts: limits of acceptable change, visitor impact management, visitor experience and resource protection, visitor activity management process, the recreation opportunity spectrum, tourism optimization model, etc.

NPAA shall ensure that the public use plan is established, implemented, and maintained valid and updated and shall maintain records for public use plan reviews.

NPAA shall keep a record of the public use services offered, identifying the operating regime, managing company or concession holder, period of concession and gratuity or cost of the service for the visitor.

NPAA shall monitor number and type of visitor and their perception of use, information, and interpretation. This data shall be recorded at visitor centres and at staffed information points.

NOTE 3   Feedback can be obtained through comments, suggestions, complaints, and visitor satisfaction surveys.

4.3   Impacts of public use plan

NPAA shall monitor at least the following aspects:

a)   energy consumption (and gradually replace the most contaminating sources of energy);

It is recommended to gradually replace the most contaminating sources of energy. Renewable energy techniques (solar, wind, etc.) and appliances that use less energy are highly recommended. If possible, air conditioning systems/equipment should be avoided.

b)   water consumption;

c)   waste generated;

d)   use of harmful products;

e)   cleaning and maintenance;

f)   residual water of public use facilities;

g)   maximum number of visitors admitted is attained and in control, in order to prevent exceeding limit.

NPAA shall identify potential visitors' impacts on the environment and shall develop mitigation alternatives for the negative impacts.

NOTE 1   Potential negative impacts can include water, soil, air, noise, and physical pollution.

NPAA shall review the public use plan taking into account the results of the monitoring processes.

NOTE 2   The use of indicators can be a method for monitoring.

NPAA shall prepare an annual report of public use to include the most relevant data relating to monitoring and evaluation of public use and future improvement actions.

4.4 Staff

NPAA shall plan, develop, and record training activities for staff, volunteers, and concession holders according to their positions.

Staff should be trained in visitor and community relations, conflict resolution, risk management, wilderness first responder methods, waste management processes, ecological research and monitoring, and patrolling and law enforcement. Training should be in line with individual roles and levels of responsibility.

NPA staff, in direct contact with visitors, should be available to provide information, enforcement, and monitoring of trails and groups that travel into the most sensitive zones. The staff should be capable of giving this information in foreign languages.

5 Services provision

5.1 Access and reception

The NPAA shall define and communicate the admission conditions. This information shall include, at least, the following:

a) timetable and period of the year in which the area is open to the public;

b) restrictions regarding means of transport, access, and activities;

c) entrance fee, if any;

d) general recommendations for visitors, including groups;

e) contacts details in case of emergency.

The NPAA shall guarantee the visitor is welcomed and informed about public use services, safety, and low impact practices.

NPAA shall communicate regulations, arrange tours, and collect entrance fees if required. Usage, behaviours, and restrictions to visitors shall also be communicated and explained.

NPAA shall inform visitors which activities are restricted and can only be allowed with the help of a guide.

5.2 Information

5.2.1 General

NPAA shall communicate NPA values, public use services, safety, and negative low impact practices. NPAA shall provide this information on-site and make it accessible in advance. Information related to the access of NPA by public transport or other environmentally friendly means of transport shall be provided.

NPAA should establish a method to communicate with third parties.

NPAA shall give, at least, the following information to visitors (generally at the reception):

a) name of NPA and NPAA;

b) access conditions;

c) characteristics of the natural protected area, territory, and location of facilities (i.e. maps);

d) timetable;

e) services provided;

f) maximum number of visitors admitted for every activity or service provided;

g) advance notice on any variations in guided tours, including changes to group sizes;

h) emergency contacts;

i) information on how visitors manage their own wastes;

j) safety measures and prohibited behaviours; availability of drinking water in the area.

The NPAA shall provide information for the visit of the NPA through printed, approved, and dated publications.

As a minimum, the NPAA shall provide a general brochure, a map of the area with location of facilities and services, natural resources, and indication of trails. The brochure and the map can be combined in only one publication.

NPAA shall choose and justify the languages for written information. This choice shall respect the demand profile of international visitors.

NPAA shall define the manner in which the information will be transmitted (brochure, signposting, visitor or information centre).

Visitor centres shall provide staffed information points. Information points shall be located in the main accesses and/or in main sites of interest of the NPA.

NPAA shall determine internal regulations and communicate them to visitors (by printed literature, displays, videos, websites, etc.).

When NPAA offers adventure tourism activities, it should comply with ISO 21103.

5.2.2 Publication

NPAA should provide the following publications:

a) visitor's guide;

b) notebook;

c) magazine/bulletin of the natural protected area;

d) videos;

e) postcards;

f) information in digital support.

NOTE 1   Publications can be printed using recycled, environment friendly paper or obtained from sustainably managed forests.

There shall be an indication of materials for sale and their prices. Publications for sale shall be available for consultation in a showcase or on a counter in at least one of the staffed information facilities.

If commercial leaflets and brochures are displayed, they shall be separated from NPA information.

NOTE 2   The NPAA can also provide local arts and crafts for sale.

NOTE 3   The NPAA can also provide GPS and other multilingual communication appliances for visitors.

5.2.3 Signposting

NPAA shall have a signage policy to ensure a standardized approach throughout the NPA.

NPAA shall signpost according to places and messages established by the public use plan.

Visitors' services and facilities shall be signposted to provide the necessary information and orientation, including indoor premises.

Signposting should be aligned to the international graphic symbols (see ISO 7001).

The signposts shall be functional, integrated into the environment, and should avoid the use of natural living elements. NPA shall keep signposts adequately maintained.

NOTE 1   Signposting inventory with type, number, location, and content can be useful.

NOTE 2   Signposts can be made with eco-friendly materials, e.g. recycled materials.

5.3   Environmental education and interpretation

NPAA shall have education and interpretation programs for visitors to increase understanding and appreciation of the NPA's environment, culture, heritage, and natural values.

NPAA shall plan the environmental education and interpretation service including staff training.

The environmental education and interpretation service can be developed through visitors' centres, interpretive tours, nature workshops, botanical exhibits, geological exhibits and hide-observation points for fauna, wildlife exhibits or guided tours, documentary films, etc.

Visitors' centres shall provide information, interpretation, safety, and recreation services through videos, displays, and other interpretive resources.

Guided tours in foreign languages, according to visitors' demands should be available.

The self-guided interpretive tour routes shall be marked and indicated and any necessary interpretive material shall be provided.

NPAA shall establish maximum group sizes for nature workshops.

The botanical exhibits shall show the species of the NPA ecosystem and may also have species cultivated in the natural protected area of ethno botanical interest. Specimens shall have signs or cards indicating scientific, common, and local names and areas of distribution.

The geological exhibits shall show the variety of rocks, minerals, fossils of the NPA geological system. Specimens shall have signs or cards indicating scientific, common, and local names and areas of distribution and other interpretive resources explaining composition and hand specimens.

NPAA shall inform about species observable at observation points for fauna (including hide points) or flora. These observation points should be fenced or with handrails.

Where exhibits are available, NPAA shall provide information on rules of visitors´ behaviour, services, and facilities.

5.4   Reservations

NPAA shall define which public use services, facilities, or NPA areas require reservation, authorization, or permission. NPAA shall avoid overbooking and/or over occupation.

NPAA shall establish a documented procedure for reservations and confirmation of these services.

NPAA shall establish and inform visitors of the requirements for

a)   necessary forms,

b)   fees,

c)   bonds,

d)   reservations information or permits,

e)   obligatory technical equipment,

f)   confirmation of reservation,

g)   maximum number of visitors admitted of each service, and

h)   any changes made on the reservation including cancellation.

5.5   Complaints handling

NPAA shall establish and communicate procedures to handle complaints or visitor concerns.

NOTE   ISO 10002 describes guidelines for complaints handling in organizations.

6   Facilities

6.1   General

According to the public use plan (see Clause 4), NPAA shall establish and provide recreation facilities.

Facilities provided for recreation or leisure (such as life-trails, wellness stations, fishing, or kinder playgrounds) should be easily accessible, allowing visitors to enjoy them safely and without supervision.

Toilet facilities suitable for use by visitors with disabilities or requiring baby-changing facilities should be clearly indicated.

When facilities are used by children, supervision by parents or adults should be required by NPAA.

The facilities shall be operated in such a way that they offer quality to visitors. Should such conditions not exist, visitors shall be advised in advance of the circumstance and offered an alternative, if available.

NPAA should provide refuges in mountain areas, high mountain, and other isolated areas or areas with difficult access.

NPAA shall define the infrastructure development taking into account the sustainability principles (e.g., access and connection to public transport networks, location and size of car parks, availability of lodgings, restaurants, etc.).

NPAA shall provide safe facilities. These facilities shall minimize negative environmental impacts and conform to carrying capacity.

Facilities should be constructed for energy efficiency, using renewable energy wherever possible. The permaculture techniques of building are recommended.

NPAA shall ensure that new facilities are compatible with the physical and cultural environment and they shall

a)   harmonize with surroundings in terms of scale and design,

b)   respect topography,

c)   diminish visual impact for supporting infrastructure (using vegetation or topography, etc.), and

d)   refurbish and restore to preserve patrimony.

Facilities in existence should be adapted gradually.

Toilet facilities shall be provided in visitors centres, camping areas, and natural workshops.

NPAA shall maintain an inventory of all public use facilities including the signposting (see 5.2.3).

6.2 Visitor centre

The visitor centre should be located near the NPA entrance or one of the main sites of interest.

The visitor centre shall have information and interpretation areas (see 5.3), drinkable water, first aid kit, and waste management facilities.

6.3 Trail

NPAA shall plan trails for different levels of experience and duration, and they should be accessible from the main access point. The marked trails shall be planned in accordance with the characteristics and fragility of the area. Characteristics of marked trails shall be communicated to visitors.

Signs shall provide, at least, this information:

a) the start and end of the trail;

b) identification and sketch of the route;

c) links with other trails and direction indicators at crossing points and in confusing sections of trails;

d) type of route: lineal or circular;

e) length/average time (on foot, bicycle, horseback);

f) minimum equipment required;

g) emergency contact and location reference;

h) availability of refuges;

i) kind of use recommended (on foot, bicycle, horseback).

Marked trails should be easy to find, take visitors to interesting features, accommodate a range of walking abilities (e.g. short, moderate, long, difficult, and easy), be easier to walk on than surrounding land, be contoured on hills, encourage a one-way flow of traffic (e.g. loop trails), and avoid very sensitive habitat types or species. Self-guided trails that visitors navigate themselves should be located in intensive use zones.

NPAA should advise about difficulty and suitability for different groups of visitors including maximum and minimum elevation, restrictions, and recommendations (best hours, seasons, under some weather conditions, etc.).

In the case of self-guided trails or those with written guides, the marking of the trails shall coincide with the description given in supporting material.

6.4 Observation point

NPAA shall locate observation points in places of special interest to enjoy views and landscapes. They shall be signposted and meet safety requirements. They should be integrated into the trails system.

6.5 Recreational area

NPAA shall provide areas for leisure and free time activities respecting NPA resources and visitors' safety.

The NPA public use plan shall define which areas shall be provided with infrastructures.

6.6 Camping area

NPAA shall mark the perimeter of suitable sites, respecting the carrying capacity of the area.

The land shall be adequate in terms of slopes and drainage, also giving sufficient shade by natural or other means.

Camping areas with services shall provide a first aid kit and an information panel.

Camping areas with no services shall provide information panels.

6.7   Refuge

The refuge shall be designed according to the visitors' needs and respect the risk management plan.

Staffed refuges shall have at least a first aid kit and common resting area.

6.8   Nature workshop centre

The nature workshop shall have information area, drinkable water, and first-aid kit.

7   Outsourcing

When NPAA chooses to outsource any activity that affects visitors´ experience, the NPA shall ensure control over such activities. The type and extent of control to be applied to these outsourced activities shall be defined within the public use plan (see Clause 4).

NPAA shall define minimum level requirements for environmental performance of outsourced activity that conform to legal requirements and reflect current best-practice thinking.

NPAA shall keep records of public use services offered and identify the operating system, outsourcers, and duration.

NPAA shall ensure that outsourcers comply with the public use plan.

NPAA shall control the accuracy of the information supplied by the outsourcers that commercialize public use facilities (see Annex B).

8   Safety

NPAA shall implement a risk management process that addresses risks for visitors and staff.

NOTE   ISO 31000 gives guidance on risk management processes.

Risk treatment measures shall be documented and implemented. These can be based on experience and historical data. Examples of treatment measures are roles, protocols and rules, and alternative procedures for different emergencies (accidents, natural catastrophes such as fire and floods, among others). The risk management process shall take into account maximum number of visitors admitted.

As a minimum, the treatment measures included within good practices for tourist services provided shall be considered.

The effectiveness of these treatment measures shall be monitored with a periodical review. The periodicity of this review should comply with the state of the art procedures.

NPAA shall communicate to staff the identified risks and treatment measures and ensure that staff has appropriate and up-to-date knowledge in first aid practices and emergency procedures.

NPAA shall communicate to visitors the relevant identified risks and emergency resources available.

NPAA shall publicize how visitors can register themselves before adventure tourism activities or research activities and should monitor their return.

NPAA shall communicate restrictions to use and circulation of visitors for safety reasons. Examples are information brochures, fencing barriers, and signs.

Whenever water is available, visitors shall be informed if it is drinkable or not, using the international standardized symbol (see ISO 7001).

NPA offering adventure tourism activities can consider ISO 21101 or specific standards when they exist.

9 Waste management, cleaning, and maintenance

NPAA shall define waste management in relation to NPA facilities and areas. This shall include separate collection facilities for recyclable waste such as glass, metal, plastic, paper, and organic waste.

NPAA shall publicize to visitors and public use services on how to manage their waste.

NOTE   Waste management includes collection, storage, and disposal.

NPAA shall keep facilities clean and in operating conditions.

NPAA shall organize tasks of cleaning and maintenance of public use facilities.

NPAA shall establish a method and frequency for cleaning and maintenance that

— minimizes and substitutes, when available, the use of harmful substances or products and ensure the service provision of facilities, and

— includes recycle and disposal (such as batteries, glass, paper, plastics, and metals).

Exposure to climatic conditions and intensity of use of facilities by visitors might be factors to consider in the frequency of cleaning and maintenance.

Annex A
(informative)

Accessibility

The Natural Protected Areas Authorities should contribute to the full integration and appropriate interaction of people with disabilities and those with reduced mobility. These items should be contemplated:

a) mobility access:

   1) wheelchair accessible;

   2) reserved parking;

   3) barrier-free (i.e. access, meeting rooms, restrooms).

b) hearing access:

   1) sign language interpreters;

   2) TTY access or internet-based TRS.

c) sight access:

   1) large print/Braille copies;

   2) technical support to help with assistive devices and screen readers (e.g. JAWS reader);

   3) gloves to touch three dimensional work (where permissible);

   4) Tactile Ground Indicator Surface (TGSI).

NPAA should also consider the following:

— a step free entrance;

— provision of reliable information about degrees of accessibility of tourist services provided in the NPA;

— at least one counter of 0,70 m in height, which is accessible to wheelchair users and visitors of low height;

— training of the personnel for the appropriate attention of people with any sort of disability;

— accessible signage and information: signage should be simple, consistent, and contrasting with its background (such as walls or doors). Also, Braille signs should be considered;

— parking space: NPAA should consider parking space for people with disabilities when considering distance.

Annex B
(informative)

Consumers' rights

Regarding provision of information and other commercial activities, the NPAA should provide the following information about consumers' rights upon request:

a) contact details for making a complaint, including both a telephone number and an email or postal address of the government agencies that bring law enforcement actions to protect the consumers;

b) how to get advice on consumer problems or complaints;

c) general terms and conditions.

NPAA should not necessarily pursue the visitors' complaint on their behalf.

Additionally, for commercial activities, NPAA should guarantee that visitors are informed about the following:

— business name, legal status, address, and any email address or telephone number;

— main features of the service and the price;

— date agreed for the service provision, or within a reasonable time, if it has not been agreed for a specific date;

— costs agreed beforehand, or the reasonable cost, if it has not been previously agreed;

— after-sales guarantees, if any.

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ICS 03.080.30; 03.200

Price based on 14 pages

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