

SAI

PLATFORM

PROJECTS

SAIRISI

SUSTAINABLE ITALIAN RICE PROJECT

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Farmer Spotlight



Claudio Melano

Claudio Melano started working on his farm in 1960 after his grandfather bought it. In 2016 Claudio introduced cover crop to the farm and he achieved positive results within its first year of use.



Through SAIRISI training sessions and field visits Claudio was able to examine the benefits of cover crop and better understand the rationale for its use.

He also learned about practices that have helped him reduce his use of water and spend less money on the treatment of soil. In addition, Claudio has also significantly reduced his use of nitrogen by 30 units per hectare.

Roberto Priora

Roberto Priora had been farming organic rice for nearly two decades before implementing precision agriculture in his farming practices.



Attending SAIRISI training sessions and field visits persuaded Roberto of the economic and environmental benefits to invest in machines that are more precise and more efficient. Since making this adjustment he has seen a significant reduction of errors in the field.

The SAIRISI training sessions and field visits also convinced him to start using drones to optimise his time more efficiently in water management practices.



SAIRISI Sustainable Italian Rice Project

“In this sector you need to look to the future to guarantee your product is placed in the market by paying attention to the quality of your product. Your product needs to be liked by the consumer who is paying more and more attention to how the product is farmed”

Robertino Sarasso, Parboriz farmer

The SAIRISI Sustainable Italian Rice Project from the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform offers a unique pre-competitive collaboration of the rice value chain that contributes to economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

SAIRISI evolved from previous individual efforts to address sustainability in rice farming: namely those by Kellogg's Origins and Unilever. It is now a collaborative project involving SAIRISI members, farmers, millers, and other stakeholders in addressing the sustainability of rice.

Sustainability Objectives

SAIRISI is focussed on long-term objectives of sustainability through knowledge sharing that enable farmers to introduce sustainable practices to their farms, and contribute to a better product and more sustainable planet.

SAIRISI's 7 Goals



Why SAIRISI?



of the world's rice production occurs in Europe



of the world's population live in Europe



Italy produces 50%-51% of Europe's rice

If Italian rice is to be competitive in the market it needs to be made sustainably. Only 0.4% of the world's rice production occurs in Europe. Yet nearly three-quarters of a billion people – or 12% of the world's population live in Europe. Italy currently produces just over half of all of Europe's rice (50%-51%). Despite this, Europe is reliant on importing rice, predominantly from Asia, to meet its needs.

Without concentrated efforts on improving sustainability (e.g. through knowledge sharing and training sessions) and increasing support for farmers (e.g. subsidies), it is likely that food security concerns will increase as production numbers fall and farmers face growing economic uncertainty.



Growing Awareness

Sustainability is not only the way of the future, but it's the way of the present. Consumers are increasingly demanding products that are created sustainably, and they want to know its origins. A 2015 Nielsen survey found that two-thirds of respondents would pay more for a product which had made positive environmental or

social change. Another survey found that 88% of respondents would be more loyal to a company if it committed to environmental and social issues. By contributing to a sustainable Italian rice value chain, and holding a higher standard for rice, SAIRISI members are setting Italian rice apart from other rice.

Who is Involved?

6 Members

Ebro

EURICOM
EUROPEAN RICE COMPANY

Kellogg's

MIGROS



Unilever



9 Millers

Ceriotti, Curtiriso, Martinotti, Mundi Riso, Naturis, Parboriz, Scotti, Riso Salsa, and Taverna



140 Farmers

From the Italian rice provinces Vercelli, Novara, and Pavia



3 Universities & 1 Non-Profit Organisation

University of Milan, University of Pavia, University of Turin and Lipu



1 National Agency

Ente Nazionale Risi

A Valuable Partner

SAI Platform partnered for the SAIRISI project with Ente Nazionale Risi, the only national body in the food ardent country of Italy that focusses on just one crop. This partnership provides Ente Nazionale Risi a platform to share and transfer their research and knowledge to farmers in an interactive, learning conducive, and convincing manner.

Sharing Knowledge

Training Sessions

In collaboration with researchers and experts, SAIRISI hosts training sessions for farmers. With sessions largely guided by Ente Nazionale Risi, they also provide a knowledge sharing platform for farmers to share best practices in sustainable farming. Topics

covered so far have included soil preparation, nutrient management, precision agriculture, crop protection, weed management, environmental issues, biodiversity, GHG emissions, and the EU Common Agriculture Policy.



Identifying the Gaps

SAIRISI farmers have access to, and receive training on, SAI Platform's Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) tool. Through the FSA, farmers can better identify sustainability gaps in their farming practices. With a clearer understanding of where improvements can be made, farmers are more able to efficiently improve their practices the following year.



“SAIRISI allows us in a credible, efficient, cost effective way and with a sector-wide focus, to raise awareness and to provide the tools to demonstrate and improve performance regarding sustainable agriculture, which is a fast-growing market demand and will quickly become the “new normal” for Italian rice farmers and millers”

Emmanuel Duffaut,
CSR & Sustainability Manager, Ebro Foods

Field Visits

The field visits provide farmers a first-hand look at best practices that are being implemented in the region. By observing positive results, farmers are increasingly implementing more sustainable practices on their own farms.

Building Relationships



From the field to the kitchen table, the value chain of rice includes many actors that rarely meet each other. SAIRISI provides the opportunity for our members, which include wholesalers and retailers, to better know exactly where their rice is coming from. It also provides the opportunity for them to better know the people who are cultivating it. Simultaneously, the project

enables farmers to take greater pride in their product by allowing them to more easily know where their product is going and what it goes into. By breaking down the invisible walls between actors across the rice value chain, trust across the chain is increased as all actors work together in achieving their own objectives in conjunction with collaborative objectives.

“Migros takes its commitment towards sustainable development very seriously and continuously seeks to improve their products. This also applies to rice, thus, for this purpose, SAIRISI is an important partner in implementing our sustainability goals in the field by working closely with the farmers on the ground.”

Alexander Brunner, Ecology and Food Specialist, Migros

More Sustainable Together

The SAIRISI Italian Sustainable Rice Project enables SAI Platform to work closely with SAIRISI members in addressing their demands and challenges. It empowers and encourages farmers in the Northwest of Italy to share their knowledge and experiences with one another. SAIRISI also enables farmers to work

more closely with millers and SAIRISI members while contributing to a greater global good in addressing issues such as food security, climate change, threats to biodiversity, and more. With all members of the rice value chain working together it is a win-win-win for all parties involved.

Achieving Sustainable Development Goals



The OECD claims the private sector to be the missing piece of the “SDG puzzle.” The more companies that are willing to commit to sustainability projects such as SAI Platform’s SAIRISI Project, the closer the planet comes to achieving the UN’s SDGs.

SAI Platform and the SAIRISI project are committed to contributing to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and improving sustainability in the Italian rice value chain. The SDGs that SAIRISI are directly contributing to are:



Through the collaborative effort of all SAIRISI members across the rice value chain, the SAIRISI project is confident these SDGs can be achieved.



SDG Spotlight: 15. Life on Land

Farmers involved in the SAIRISI project care about biodiversity. With assistance from EU funds, many farmers have been able to further contribute to improving biodiversity in and around their rice fields. A vibrant biodiversity is necessary for ecosystems to flourish and for preventing the extinction of species. One SAIRISI farmer has even reported the return of a species of water spider that had not been around since the 1800s, amongst an increase in population and

species of frogs and crested newts. Renato Petrini, a Parboriz farmer, even notes that his farm has become a photographic oasis for bird watchers – in turn, offering a potential spinoff of increased recreational activities in the region. LIPU Onlus, an Italian organisation focussed on preserving wildlife and the conservation of biodiversity, provides agronomical technical support to SAIRISI in this area.

Climate Change



“We understood that by modifying even only slightly some of our work that we could obtain substantial improvements. For example, how we manage the soil can significantly influence the level of CO2 emissions.”

Robertino Sarasso, Parboriz farmer

“SAIRISI is helping us create a relationship with farmers that we didn't have before. In the past, millers and farmers were separated. With SAIRISI, we now communicate constantly. This is a turning point [in the development of the value chain]. We are starting to better understand the farmers' needs which subsequently makes it easier for us to effectively support them.”

Paolo Savarese, Quality Manager, MUNDI RISO (Ebro Foods Miller)

Climate change threatens significant harm to the rice industry. The World Food Programme predicts that climate change may increase the risk of hunger by 20% by 2050, with a reduction in agricultural production by 30% during that time. Investing and committing to SAIRISI is investing in and committing to food security, reducing water waste, reducing hunger, and combatting climate change.



SDG Spotlight: 13. Climate Action

SAI Platform and SAIRISI members are committed to fighting climate change. Easy to make changes in rice farming practices can make significant differences in reducing greenhouse gas emissions – such as CO2 emissions.



SDG Spotlight: 17. Partnerships for the Goals

SAI Platform empowers all actors across the rice value chain to work collaboratively in order to achieve SDGs, joint objectives, and support each other in achieving their own goals.

SAI Platform and SAIRISI Members Early Successes

SAI Platform and SAIRISI members have created a sustainable agriculture knowledge sharing model which can be emulated and transferred to other sustainable agriculture projects. Despite being in a nascent stage, SAIRISI has already made a positive impact on sustainable farming practices and the rice value chain in the Northwest of Italy.

Some of SAIRISI's early successes include:



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The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform

SAI Platform is the global food and drink industry platform for developing sustainable agriculture solutions through member-driven pre-competitive collaboration. SAI Platform works with its members and external stakeholders to catalyse change and establish sustainable agriculture as a pre-requisite for doing business throughout the food and drink industry supply chain.

SAIRISI PROJECT

ADDENDUM



SAIRISI, the Sustainable Italian Rice Project was a SAI Platform project from 2016 to 2020. It offered a unique pre-competitive collaboration of the rice value chain involving buyers, millers, farmers, government, academia and other stakeholders in addressing the sustainability of rice.

The addendum was published on the completion of the SAIRISI project in 2020. This is an addendum to the SAIRISI case-study published in 2018 while the project was still in operation.

SAIRISI Timeline

2016

Identification of “SAIRISI Partners” and Project Concept

Understanding the **supply chain landscape**, engaging **strategic partners** and building a **programme with priority theme**.

Two Masterclasses on **Soil and Water**, followed by a field visit.



2017

Expanding on the Project Priorities

Three Masterclasses on **Health & Safety, Chemical Storage and Biodiversity**.

Cool Farm Tool integration training for project members.

Field Day on **Precision Ag** and another with LIPU on **Biodiversity**.

Experimental outreach and piloting **WhatsApp Group** as a tool to connect and engage farmers and agronomists, with resources from ENR.

Best Practices Documents

Best Practices documents, precursors to Sustainable Rice Growing in Italy.



2018

Empowering Local Leadership

Multiple **Local Examples of Sustainable Champions** highlighted further local demonstration of sustainable agriculture.

Two Masterclasses & two Field Visits.

Case Study written exemplifying the SAIRISI approach for collaboration.

Best Practices of Sustainable Rice Growing in Italy created, **linking SAIRISI to FSA.**

2019

Building Local Capacity

Two **Local FSA Experts** trained and available for all Italian agricultural supply chain companies to engage and further facilitate FSA implementation.

SRP benchmarked to the FSA to further global significance of the project and SAI Platform's harmonisation tools.

Masterclass on **Conservation Agriculture, Biodiversity and Precision Agriculture.**

Six **FSA Training** sessions delivered in 2019-2020.

Producer Survey to understand engagement/outreach.



2020

Mission Accomplished: Ensuring SAIRISI Legacy

Transfer ongoing support for **local experts** and **FSA Community of Practice.**

Culmination of all **communications** and **lessons-learned resources** on SAI Platform website.

Project Outcomes

Accomplishments: Outreach & Farmer Engagement

1

Educating and Training Farmers

Eight Masterclasses engaging **500+** farmers on:



Water management



Pest management



Nutrient management



Precision agriculture



Biodiversity



Conservation agriculture



GHG measurement



Soil management



Economic sustainability

2

On-Farm Demonstration



Demonstrated value of industry collaboration on sustainability.



Showcased & promoted "Flagship Farmers", who continue to lead the community by example.

3

FSA Uptake in Italy



Local capacity built to now include two trained FSA implementers for future engagement.



Six FSA trainings have been conducted in the Northern Italy with rice growers and supply chain members.



FSA is now taught at Milan and Turin Universities as a mechanism for demonstrating and communicating sustainability.



Accomplishments: Documents & Communications



Industry-developed, FSA-aligned “**Best Practices of Sustainable Rice Growing in Italy**” document linking relevant practices identified through gap assessment to relevant FSA interactions.



Demonstration Case Studies and **SAI Platform Case Study** of how pre-competitive collaboration and SAI Platform were able to foster engagement, trust and change in this sector and geography.



SRP benchmarked against FSA to help communicate Italian rice sustainability (final stages of process for public release).

We would like to thank the efforts of our collaborating companies and partners in the successful implementation and completion of SAIRISI

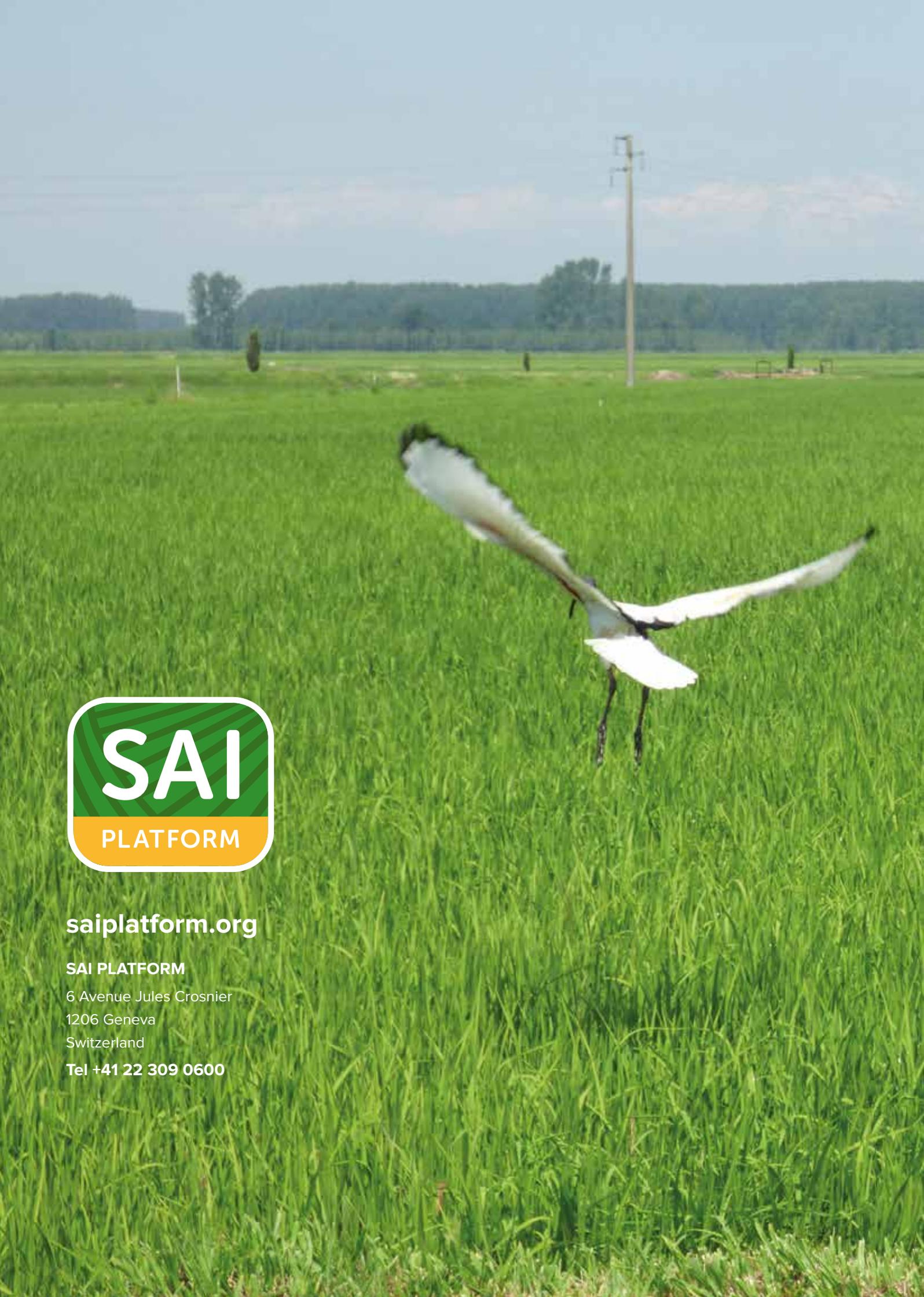
*Participating companies **Ebro, Euricom, Kellogg's, Migros, Parboriz, SP S.p.A.** for leading out to engage in sustainability and investing in this project.*

*Our valuable partner **Ente Nazionale Risi** and in particular **Dr. Marco Romani** for significant support, guidance and ongoing expertise.*

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***Paolo Savarese, Quality Manager at Mundi Riso** for leading out, on behalf of the industry during 2018-2019 SAIRISI seasons.*



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