

# HEI RFIQ 26-1: Studies of Air Pollution and Health Effects in East Africa

Health Effects Institute  
Webinar for Potential Applicants | March 31, 2026

**Thank you for joining us. The meeting will begin shortly.**

## **Housekeeping:**

- If you experience logistical difficulties, please email Global Initiatives: [globalinitiatives@healtheffects.org](mailto:globalinitiatives@healtheffects.org)
- You can turn on **closed captioning** at the bottom of your screen to the right of the Q&A button.
- Please put questions about the RFIQ or application process in the **Q&A** box.
- After the webinar, HEI will post the webinar slides and recording to the HEI website within the next week.

# Today's Agenda

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**Introduction to HEI**

**Overview of the RFIQ**

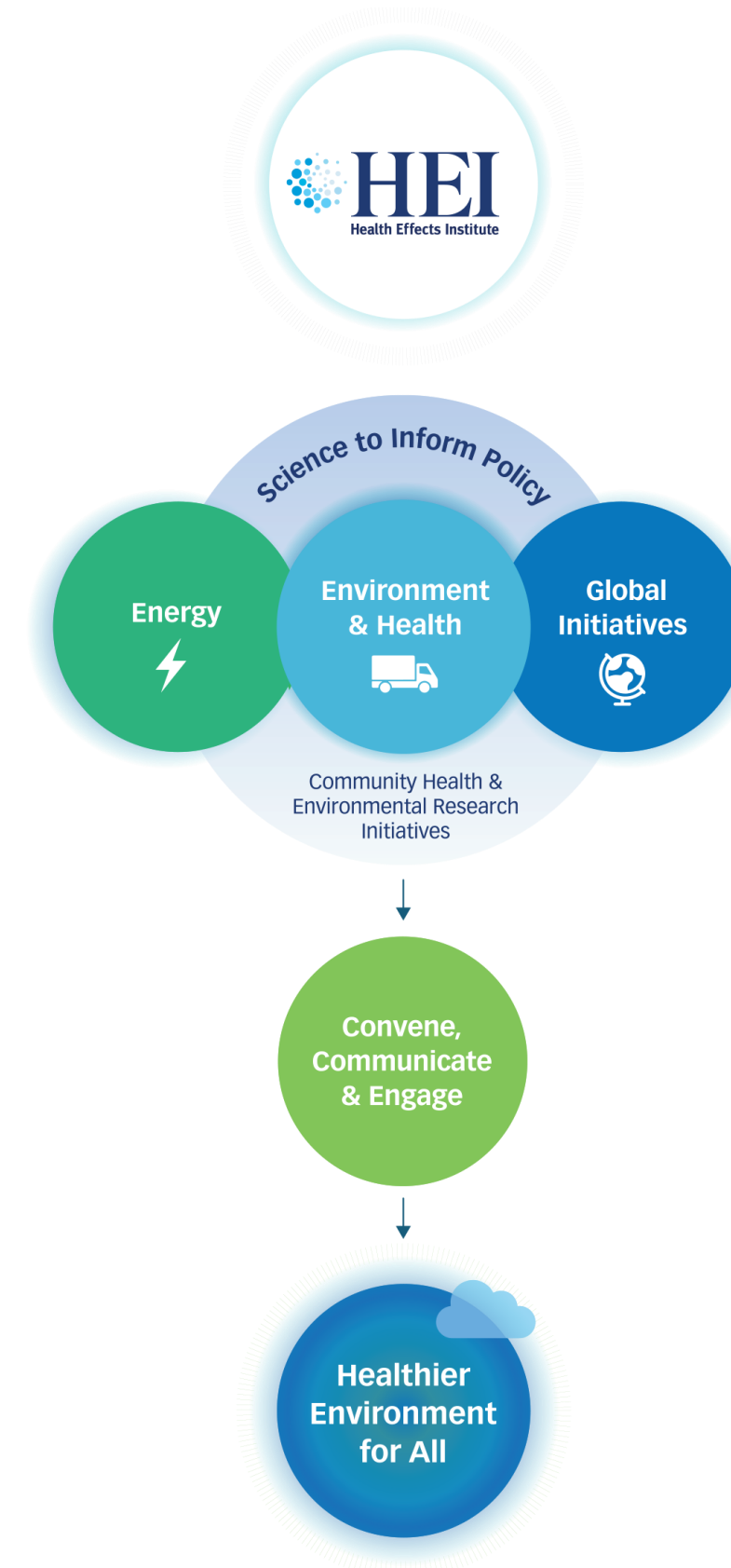
**Expectations for Research Proposals**

**Q&A**

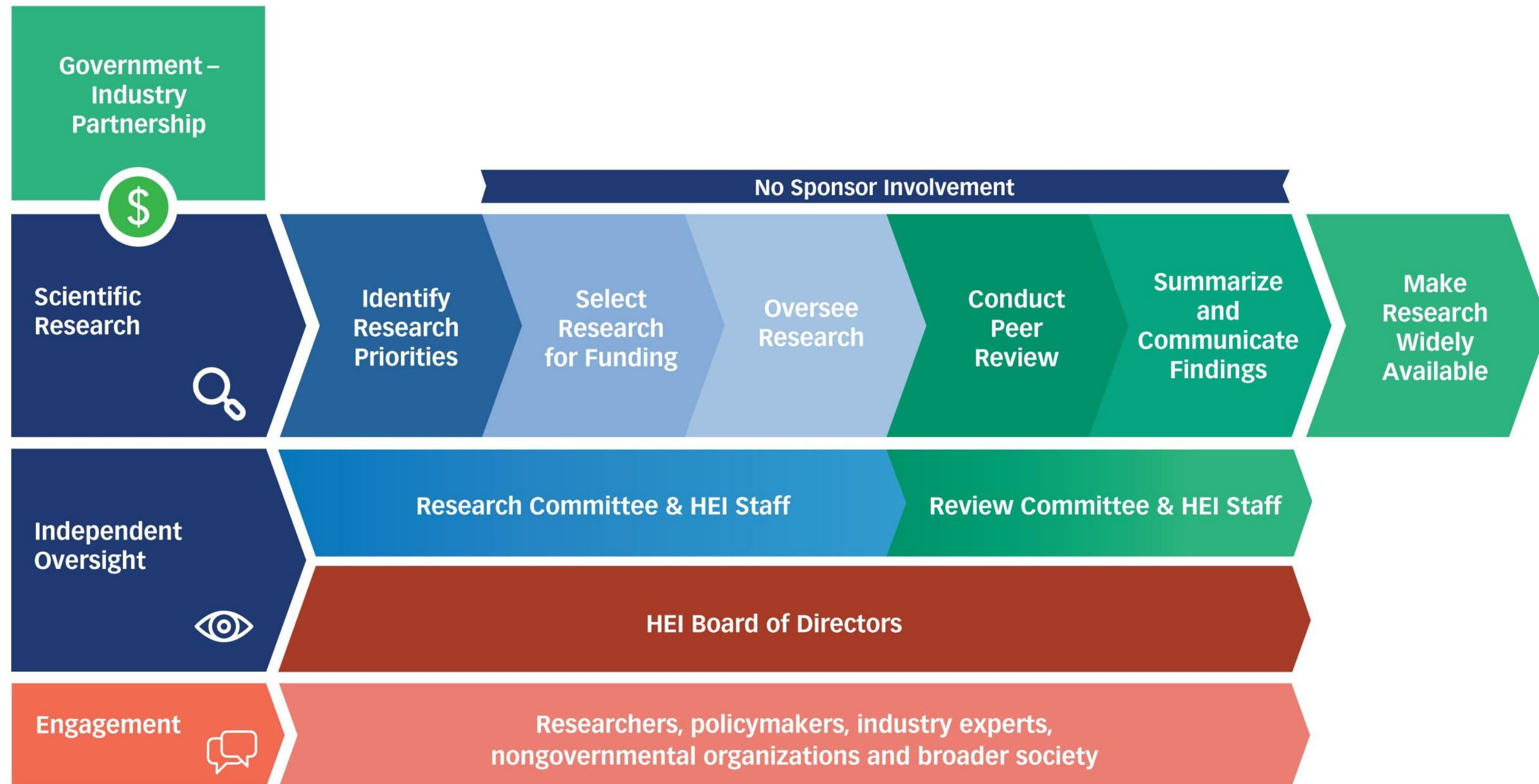
# About the Health Effects Institute

HEI is a **nonprofit** corporation with the mission to provide **impartial** science to inform decisions that foster a healthier environment for all.

Through three programs – Environment and Health, Energy, and Global Initiatives – HEI delivers complementary research and insights to inform public health solutions.



# How the HEI scientific process works



# HEI Global Initiatives

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**High-quality, impartial data** on air pollution exposure and health impacts

**Scientific capacity** to conduct locally relevant research

**Evidence synthesis** tailored to inform national and regional policy decisions

**Collaborative networks** connecting researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and communities



# Global Initiatives Oversight Committee

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***Jonathan M. Samet, Chair***

Professor, Department of Environmental & Occupational Health,  
Department of Epidemiology, Colorado School of Public Health,  
USA



***Kalpana Balakrishnan***

Associate Dean (Research), Department of Environmental Health  
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Bangladesh



***Caradee Wright***

South African Medical Research Council, South Africa

<https://www.healtheffects.org/about/global-initiatives-oversight-committee>

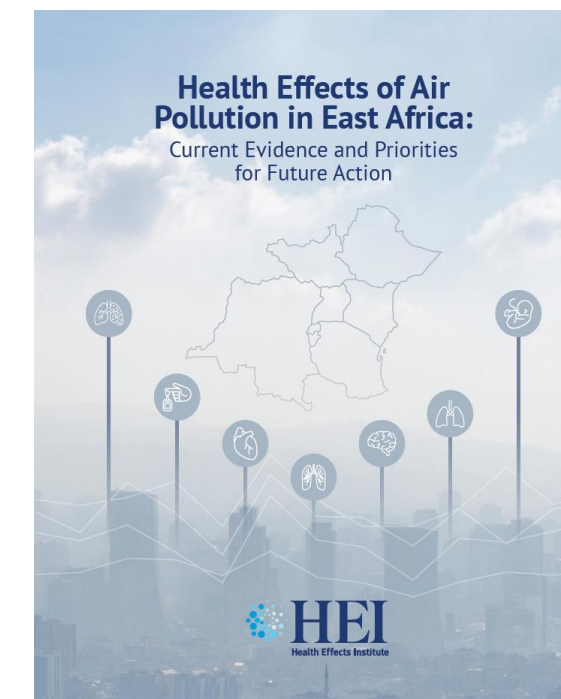
# Overview of the RFIQ and Expectations for RFIQ Responses

# Background and Rationale

- Air pollution is the second leading risk factor for deaths in the East African region.
- [Current literature](#) on the health effects of air pollution for the region is limited, but largely in line with global evidence.
- HEI conducted a [scoping review](#) and hosted several workshops (2023 & 2025) that identified opportunities to support the design and conduct of new studies to fill existing knowledge gaps.
- Workshop outcomes and scoping review findings were used to develop the objectives of this RFIQ.



Scoping Workshop March 2023  
Nairobi, Kenya



## RFIQ 26-1 : Objective

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**Identify promising air pollution and health studies conducted by qualified research teams in East Africa.**

The RFIQ will assess the scope and feasibility of such studies and the qualifications and research experience of potential teams as an initial step in the funding process.

Submissions should be led by investigators with primary institutional affiliation in East Africa.



**Eligible East African Countries**

## RFIQ 26-1: Topics of Interest

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- Characterization of population or individual exposure to air pollution in indoor and outdoor environments at different spatial and temporal scales.
- Exposure to air pollution from specific sources of importance in East African cities, such as vehicular emissions and domestic fuel burning, and incidence of disease or other short-term outcomes.
- Use of existing health and surveillance data to link exposure to air pollution with adverse health outcomes, including cardiovascular disease, respiratory diseases, stroke, cancer, diabetes, maternal health outcomes and child health outcomes.
- Assess the impacts of clean air actions (e.g., household energy policies, cleaner fuels and vehicle standards) at national or sub national levels on air quality, including any population health benefits, to determine the effectiveness and outcomes of policy decisions.

# RFIQ 26-1: Key Considerations

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- Clear relevance and added value of the research on health effects of air pollution in East Africa
- PM<sub>2.5</sub> is of highest interest; include additional pollutants (NO<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>) wherever possible
- Where appropriate, include appropriate statistical and analytical methods for assessment of accuracy, precision, and bias
- Proposed work should be clearly distinguished from ongoing work funded by other institutions

Multi-country analyses are particularly encouraged

# Evaluation Process

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- Global Initiatives Oversight Committee reviews RFIQ responses and invites selected applicants to submit a full application.
- Full application are reviewed by a review panel. The panel recommends studies for funding to the HEI Board of Directors.
- HEI Board of Directors provides final approval for funding decision.

# Criteria for Evaluating RFIQ Responses

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Relevance to the aims of the RFIQ



Scientific merit and rigor



Personnel and facilities



Reasonableness of the proposed budget

Complementarity and likelihood of proposed studies to address the breadth and depth of the RFIQ's topics of interest will be considered by HEI.

For this RFIQ, HEI will not consider funding deployment of monitoring networks as a standalone activity.

# Eligibility Criteria

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## Research Team

- Principal Investigator – affiliated with an eligible established research organization in a position that allows grant submissions
- Past research and publication history
- Access to resources needed to complete the research
- Cover the full range of expertise necessary to conduct the proposed work
- Multi-sectoral engagement, including with relevant policymakers, is strongly encouraged

## Eligible Organizations

- Lead organization must be an academic or independent, non-profit, free standing research institution or non-regulatory government agency
- Scientists from regulatory government agencies can participate but not lead a study
- For-profit companies can participate as consultants

# Budget

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- HEI expects to fund 2-3 studies (1 to 2 years in duration) of budgets between \$50,000-75,000 each.
- **The costs**
  - Can be used for personnel (including PI, students, postdocs, technicians, and others), equipment, supplies as needed.
  - Can include publication fees and travel to present findings at conferences.
  - Indirect costs are capped at 30% (*cannot be waived*).
  - Includes preparation of the journal manuscript(s)/report.

# Investigator Commitments

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- HEI issues contracts, not grants
- Biannual progress reports and webinars to ensure high quality
- Present a poster at the HEI Annual Conference
- Changes to proposed work or budget require Global Initiatives Oversight Committee approval to ensure the study stays true to its original goals and the RFIQ
- Prepare and respond to reviews of journal manuscript(s)/report

Please review HEI's full investigator commitments before applying:  
<https://www.healtheffects.org/research/investigators/commitments>

# Important Dates

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**April 30, 2026:** RFIQ responses due

**May 2026:** HEI Global Initiatives Oversight Committee reviews the RFIQ responses

**June 10, 2026:** Responses to Applicants

**August 31, 2026:** Invited full applications due

**October 2026:** External review

**October 2026:** HEI Global Initiatives Oversight Committee reviews full applications

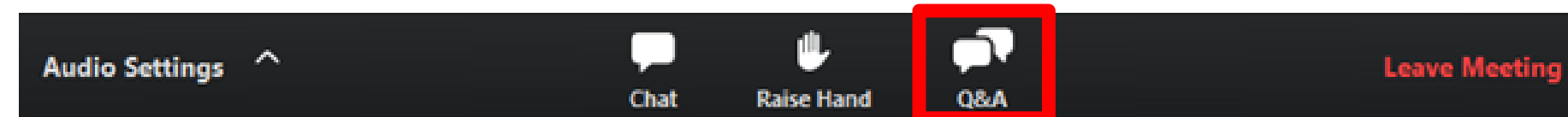
**November 2026:** Funding recommendations communicated to applicants

**November 2026:** HEI Board approval, IRB approval, QA plan preparation, and research agreement negotiations

**January 2027  
(or later):** Studies begin

# Question & Answer Period

Please submit your questions about the RFA and application process via the Q&A function.



We will post the webinar recording to our website

For additional information on the RFIQ, please visit:

<https://www.healtheffects.org/rfa/rfiq-26-1-air-pollution-and-health-effects-research-east-africa>

If you have additional questions, please contact:

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