

Developments and thinking on Horizon Europe Funding for Cluster 6 'Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment'

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Update on UK Participation in Horizon Europe

The latest information on UK funding for Horizon Europe is available here. Discussions between UK and the European Commission are continuing therefore the UK Guarantee has now been extended to calls with deadlines up to 30th September 2023 to ensure support to successful projects won from these where the delay to UK association to the programme may prevent participants from signing grant agreements.

Horizon Europe Developments

The main theme of the 2023 EU AgriResearch Conference at the end of May was "Research and Innovation Enabling Sustainable Transition in Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Areas". A recording of the event <u>is on YouTube</u>.







The keynote speaker was Rogier Schulte (Wageningen University and Research). His key message was that farmers are not short of information on how to be more sustainable – they are in fact overwhelmed. Farmers receive information from society, from sales people, from regulations, from subsidies, from debates on the radio, from social media etc., but we expect farmers to come up with strategies for their farms and their production systems that work now and into the future. They're trying every day to reinvent their farming practices to be ready for the challenges and they need help to make sense of it all.

Sjoukje Heimovaara, President of the Executive Board, Wageningen University & Research (WUR) described how cheap grain imports from America more than a century ago disrupted European grain production. The Dutch government, however, chose not to protect homegrown production but developed a network of agricultural schools, experimental stations and extension agents to increase productivity. Researchers and entrepreneurs worked in close collaboration with farmers and the government and this co-production created great efficiency and led to prosperity. In the last 60 years in the Netherlands wheat production has more than doubled per hectare, tomato production has tripled and milk production per hectare has doubled. Such productivity also led to an unsustainable pressure on the country and its nature and it is therefore urgent again to reinvent this sector. This will need new knowledge, new technology, new varieties and new procedures - now no less than a reform of the food system.

Gilles Saindon, Assistant Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Canada, described the impetus behind the development of 13 agricultural living labs in Canada - "We like to say that the work is not over until it's in the hands of the farmers". Co-development is the foundation of living labs with farmers involved throughout the innovation process, testing new practices on working farms under real conditions. The goal is to accelerate the development and adoption of sustainable practises via living labs across the country in a long term game over the next 10 years.

Frank O'Mara, Director, TEAGASC, described Ireland's Signpost Farm Programme aiming to help farmers adapt to climate change. This has identified 120 farms that have demonstrated best practise and act like lighthouse farms so that their neighbours can see what they have achieved. The goal is to work with 50,000 farms over the next five years to help them each develop an individual customised plan for their farm.

Developments towards a Circular Bio-based Economy

The Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU), which has been in operation for less than two years, signed its first grant agreements in June with <u>projects resulting from the 2022 call for proposals</u>. This disburses €116 million in Horizon Europe funding to 21 projects for the development of new bio-based products and materials in first-of-their-kind production facilities and innovative processes addressing the technological, regulatory and market challenges of the sector. The funding includes €69 million to establish **demonstration-scale production systems** and business models and build first-of-their-kind industrial-scale biorefineries and production plants focusing on the food and feed sectors.

'What next for the European bio-based sector?' will be the main theme of the first <u>CBE JU Stakeholder</u> <u>Forum 2023</u> on 6-7 December 2023 in Brussels, Belgium. Registration for the event will open in September. All stakeholders, from primary producers and researchers to industry and decision-makers, are invited to engage in discussion focusing on three questions that are crucial for the successful development of the sector across Europe:

- 1. How to stimulate demand for circular bio-based solutions?
- 2. How to facilitate access to finance to scale up circular bio-based production in Europe?
- 3. What **R&I do we need** to keep European leadership in the sector in the medium-long term?

All-island bioeconomy demonstrators - €7M support under the Shared Island Fund

DAFM has announced a competitive funding call later this year in collaboration with DAERA under the Shared Island Fund for the construction of two bioeconomy demonstrator facilities to support integration of bio-based innovation in the agriculture and marine sectors across the island. One facility will operate in each jurisdiction and at least 50% of Shared Island resourcing will be for project delivery in Northern Ireland.



Supporting the EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters

The European Commission has published a new <u>Portfolio Analysis Report</u> identifying over 800 EU-funded projects, from 16 EU funding programmes, contributing to the objectives of the EU Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters". The analysis has produced a <u>Report</u> and a <u>Dashboard</u> which allows users to interact with the data by visualising and filtering information according to specific interests.

<u>PREP4BLUE</u> is a project aiming to support the R&I goals of the Mission and facilitate its successful implementation, especially during this first phase (2022-2025). PREP4BLUE will develop tools, guidelines and methodologies to be used by stakeholders on all Mission funded projects. The project ran a webinar series titled "Planning for Citizen Participation in Mission Ocean & Waters" in May and June. Details of the webinars are available on the <u>event page</u> and <u>recordings of the webinars</u> are available. PREP4BLUE has also developed a free <u>Toolbox for Citizen Engagement</u> to support public mobilisation and citizen engagement which are crucial elements of the Mission 'Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030'.

Growth of activities supporting the EU Soil Mission

In December 2022 ten new projects were announced to prepare the ground for the transition towards healthy soils by 2030. Anyone seeking funding under the Soil Mission is advised to familiarise themselves with the activities of these successful projects and avail of the support many offer to developing activities.

- <u>SOLO</u> aims to co-create and identify knowledge gaps, priorities, novel approaches, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor the progress of the Mission R&I activities.
- <u>BENCHMARKS</u> and <u>Al4SoilHealth</u> will validate and further develop indicators to measure, monitor and assess soil health and functions making use of integrated frameworks and Artificial Intelligence to support a more harmonised reporting on soil health among Member States.
- <u>SOIL O-LIVE</u> explores the connection between soil health and nutritional, safe food, focusing on olive production, studying how soil health influences the nutritional composition, tastiness and safety of oil.
- **INBESTSOIL** will test the incorporation of an economic valuation system of ecosystem services delivered by healthy soils in five business models.
- NOVASOIL will study four business models that allow the creation of new incentives from healthy soils.
- <u>SOILVALUES</u> is expected to explore financial mechanisms such as equity investment or compensation for risk or cost reduction, as well as hybrid incentive schemes, and develop at least six business models to help land managers to make decisions.
- <u>NATIOONS</u> will act as a messenger of the Mission to national and regional stakeholders, to support the establishment of soil health living labs, including the training of <u>national mentors</u>.
- <u>HuMUS</u> will have a key role in engaging and activating municipalities, regions and citizens across Europe to stimulate dialogue, promote a shared understanding and co-create solutions to protect soil health.
- NBSoil project will support the much-needed next generation of soil advisors with a blended learning programme to enable them to implement a holistic vision of soil health through nature-based solutions.

These joined <u>PREPSOIL Project</u> (Preparing for the "Soil Deal for Europe" Mission) which **facilitates the deployment of the Mission across European regions**. It was previously awarded funding to prepare the ground for the Mission, healthy soils, and building capacities for engagement, outreach and knowledge.

In addition, the Framework Partnership 'SOILL - Support Structure for SOIL Living Labs is currently in the Grant Agreement Preparation stage and set to commence in January 2024. This project is coordinated by the <u>European Network of Living Labs</u> (ENOLL) and will support, organise, expand and advocate for the network of 100 Soil Mission Living Labs and Lighthouses throughout the entire implementation of the Soil Mission. The support actions provided by SOILL will encompass dedicated capacity building, knowledge exchange, promotion and routine monitoring for applicants and funded living labs.

Meanwhile Queen's University is successful in winning Soil Mission funding as part of the project <u>LOESS</u> - "Literacy boost through an Operational Educational Ecosystem of Societal actors on Soil health". LOESS will explore educational needs amongst school pupils (primary and secondary levels), tertiary level students,



young professionals and society, also providing opportunities for hands-on activities related to soil education through Community Engaged Research and Learning.

Sign the Mission Soil Manifesto



The European Commission recently launched the <u>Mission Soil</u> <u>Manifesto</u>. This is a non-binding document aimed at regional and local policymakers, stakeholders and citizens who recognise the need for action on soil health and are willing to engage in activities aimed at improving it. <u>Sign the Manifesto</u> and become part of a community dedicated to soil health.

By signing the Manifesto, organisations can demonstrate their commitment to soil health protection and restoration, gaining access to the latest research results and opportunities to participate in knowledge-sharing activities and events to exchange best practices for soil health. The voluntary document can be signed by representatives of municipalities, regions, private or public companies and organisations, NGOs and philanthropic

organisations, schools and education institutions, as well as by research institutions. Individuals can also sign the Manifesto and become 'Friends of the Mission Soil'.

Horizon Europe Funding

Open Call: Circular Bio-Based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU)

The second annual call of the Public-Private Partnership – the Circular Bio-Based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU) is now open. The 18 topics for submission to the **HORIZON-JU-CBE-2023** call are published here on the <u>Funding & tender opportunities portal</u>. Total budget: **€215.5 million;** Deadline: **20 September 2023.** Check the <u>Annual Work Programme 2023</u> for the complete topic text, conditions and requirements, and the <u>FAQ</u> for the frequently asked questions.

CBE JU Info Day 2023 - The recording of the info day is available on the event webpage.

If you are considering applying for the CBE JU call for project proposals 2023 or are interested in developing contacts for future collaboration in the area of the Circular bioeconomy, the CBE JU networking platform, which is open until 31 December 2023.

Open Calls - Missions

The 2023 Missions call was launched by the Commission in January, opening on 10th January 2023 with the main deadline on 20th September 2023. Info Days took place on 17th and 18th January. Links to the recorded videos are available on the <u>event webpage</u>. The missions Work Programme for 2023-2024 can be downloaded <u>here</u>. The nine topics open for the **Soil Mission call** are available to view <u>here</u> on the Funding and Tenders Portal. The eleven topics open for the **Oceans Mission call** are available to view <u>here</u> on the Funding and Tenders Portal.

Open Call: EIC Pathfinder "Challenges" Call 2023

<u>EIC Pathfinder</u> is for multi-disciplinary research teams to undertake visionary research with the potential to lead to technology breakthroughs. Research teams can apply for up to €3 or €4 million in grants. Calls will open on 20 June (Pathfinder Challenges) - Deadline date: 18 October 2023.

EIC Pathfinder Challenge: Precision Nutrition (HORIZON-EIC-2023-PATHFINDERCHALLENGES-01-03)

This Challenge will only fund multi-disciplinary research proposals that include at least nutritional, microbiome and glycan research aspects. Proposals are expected to investigate the interactions among

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nutrition, human gut microbiome and glycans beyond the state-of-the-art, to better clarify the role of diet into human health, including for example the interactions of whole plant foods, highly processed food and fermented foods with the human gut microbiome and glycans.

Horizon Europe: EIC-Pathfinder Challenges Brokerage & Community Building Innovate UK held a supporting event on 29th June for which detail can be found here: https://iuk.ktn-uk.org/events/horizon-europe-eic-pathfinder-challenges-brokerage-community/

Forthcoming: Cluster 6 Calls 2024 'Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment'

The <u>Horizon Europe Cluster 6 information days</u> will take place both physically (in Brussels) and online on **27-28 September 2023** to give potential applicants the opportunity to learn more about the funding opportunities and specific requirements in Cluster 6. CARE4BIO (the EU Network of Cluster 6 NCPs) will

organise a **physical** Brokerage Event on **26th September 2023 in Brussels** is to assist in finding the right project partners for the Cluster 6 calls for 2024.

The topics open for proposal submission can be found in the <u>Work Programme</u> and the first deadlines will be in February 2024. The event, which is free of charge, will target a wide spectrum of stakeholders, from companies (including SMEs), universities, research organisations and other interested parties, from Europe and beyond, seeking to share new project ideas and to find collaboration partners. Registration will open soon on the <u>event website</u>.



HOLD THE DATE!

KTN is planning Cluster 6 Webinar for Thursday 27th July 10:00 - 12.30 to prepare for the 2024 calls. When set up it will be announced on the KTN Events Page

There is a possibility of funding from KTN for travel to Brussels to attend the info days and brokerage event. If you would be interested in applying for this, please get in touch (elaine.groom@afbini.gov.uk)

Calls are already published on the Funding and Tenders Portal, where individual topics can be viewed along with the terms and conditions.

- Destination 1 Biodiversity and ecosystem services (Biodiv call 2024 12 topics)
- Destination 2 Fair, healthy and environment-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption (Farm2Fork call 2024 18 topics)
- Destination 3 Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors (<u>CircBio</u> call 2024 16 topics)
- Destination 4 Clean environment and zero pollution (ZeroPollution call 2024 5 topics)
- Destination 5 Land, ocean and water for climate action (Climate call 2024 7 topics)
- Destination 6 Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities (Communities call 2024 5 topics)
- Destination 7 Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal (Governance call 2024 12 topics)

The 2024 calls are expected to open on 17 October 2023, with deadlines in February and March 2024. Please do get in touch and arrange a time to discuss how your interests and ideas might fit into the forthcoming calls and explore the next steps to take.



Other Clusters - Forthcoming 2023/2024 calls

The cross-cutting nature of much of the global challenges under Pillar 2 does sometimes throw up topics of interest to Cluster 6 stakeholders. The current and past work programmes for each cluster are available on each linked cluster page; specific topics of potential interest are listed.

Cluster 1: Health

• HORIZON-HLTH-2024-DISEASE-09-01 European Partnership: One Health Anti-Microbial Resistance COFUND Action (Intended for national/regional funders); Budget €100M expecting to fund 1 grant; Opening date: 25 April 2024; Deadline date: 25 September 2024

<u>Cluster 2</u>: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive society (including Social Sciences and Humanities research)

Cluster 3: Civil security for society

 HORIZON-CL3-2024-DRS-01-01 Prevention, detection, response and mitigation of chemical, biological and radiological threats to agricultural production, feed and food processing, distribution and consumption. Research and Innovation Action; Single stage; total budget €8M; expecting to fund up to 2 grants at €4M each; Opening date; 27 June 2024; Deadline date: 20 November 2024

Cluster 4: Digital, Industry and Space

Horizon-CL4-2024-resilience-01-35 Biodegradable polymers for sustainable packaging materials.
 Innovation Action; Two stage; total budget €31M; expecting to fund up to 4 grants, €6-8M each;
 Opening date; 19 September 2023. Deadlines; 07 February 2024 (Stage 1); 24 September 2024 (Stage 2)

Cluster 5: Climate, Energy and Mobility

• HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-01-05 Development of carbon fixation technologies for biogenic flue gases. Research and Innovation Action; Single stage; total budget €8M; expecting to fund up to 2 grants at €4M each; Opening date: 12 September 2023. Deadline: 16 January 2024

Other Opportunities

Cascading funding (Funding managed by on-going projects)

Opportunities for cascading funding (calls issued by projects) can be found <u>here on the Funding and Tenders</u>
<u>Portal</u>. Calls that are currently open and relevant to the Cluster 6 area include:

- EOSC (European Open Science Cloud) Future RDA Open Call External Expert Evaluators; Deadline: 22 July 2023
- EIT Food Public Engagement Proof of Concepts Call for Proposals 2023, 2024, 2025; Deadline: 15 August 2023 (submission window 2); Deadline: 15 August 2024 (submission window 3)



GREEN ERA HUB Call

The Green ERA Hub is a transnational coordination of national research programmes in Agri-Food and biotechnology - Joining forces of ERA-Net Cofunds, EJP and self-sustained initiatives. It brings together research funders active under previous banners such as FACCE-SURPLUS, SusAN and SusCrop ERA-NETs etc. Research funders from 19 countries **including DEFRA in UK** will fund research to support projects that contribute to the development of more sustainable and resilient food and farming systems.

The first Green ERA Hub Call is open for the submission of proposals that will make "Contributions to a sustainable and resilient agri-food system".

A Call Announcement and supporting documents with further information of the Call can be found under "Call Documents" in the download area on the left-hand side of this web page https://www.submission-greenerahub.eu/call1.

- The deadline for pre-registration of proposals is July 20,
 12:00h CEST.
- The deadline for full proposal submission is September 7, 12:00h CEST.































DEFRA anticipates a contribution up to £1M. Proposals are encouraged within a maximum UK budget of £250,000 per proposal for projects of 24-26 months duration. See Page 45 of the <u>National Funding</u> Regulations (download PDF) for Funding Contact Point details.

DEFRA's priorities for funding encompass research and evidence which aims to increase productivity and sustainability, supporting the agri-food chain's transition to net zero. Projects which take a whole food chain approach from (farm to fork - production and consumption) are encouraged (subject to the specific exclusions: **DEFRA's priorities for funding are foremost bids which address Topic 1**, then Topics 3 and 4, with the lowest priority being Topic 2.

Topics and possible areas of intervention (this list is not exhaustive).

- Topic 1: Enhance fertilizer efficiency and reduce fertilizer use:
- Topic 2: Increase European protein self-sufficiency:
- Topic 3: Mitigate GHG emissions in agricultural and food systems:
- Topic 4: Sustainable energy use and production in agri-food systems

For more details download the <u>call document</u> for the full text of the announcement, the priorities for funding and the obligations of projects. The **Partnering Platform** can help you to find cooperation possibilities within the Green Era Hub calls. It can be used in the following ways:

Post a Partner Offer/Request

Please post an entry in the partnering tool, if you are looking for collaboration opportunities in project consortia and would like to offer your expertise, or if you already have a project idea and are looking for further partners to join you/your consortium. As well as contact details, you should give a brief description of your organization. Importantly also: provide some keywords describing your field of research/innovation; specify your interest and the experience, expertise and know-how you/your organization has to offer in relation to one of the call topics of Green Era Hub.

Search List of Partner Offers/Requests posted by others

The database can be searched by call topics, keywords and all the other information provided by its users.



Opportunity to join new COST Action projects

Twenty of the seventy new COST Actions approved in the last year are relevant to the agriculture, food or environmental sectors. They cover a wide range of core disciplines from agriculture and economics to veterinary sciences. Recently funded Cost Actions relevant to Cluster 6 areas are listed in **Error! Reference s ource not found.** below. Most will start in Autumn 2023.

Apply to join today!

COST Actions are different to many other EU funded projects because it is possible to join and participate in a research network once it has started, even if you were not involved at the proposal phase. This same logic applies throughout the entire lifespan of a COST Action. This is the openness of COST. Apply to join new network of interest, one of its Working Groups or become a Management Committee (MC) member.

Table 1. List of recently approved COST Actions relevant to Cluster 6.

COST Action Title	COST Action
COST ACTION TITLE	Number / link
Safety in the Game Meat Chain (SafeGameMeat)	CA22166
Solving bottlenecks in eel reproduction to support sustainable aquaculture (EELSUPPORT)	<u>CA22163</u>
Future of plant-based food: Bridging the gap of new proteins and FLAVOURsome (FLAVOURsome)	<u>CA22161</u>
Enhancing knowledge of BIOmolecular solutions for the well-being of European AQUAculture sector (BIOAQUA)	<u>CA22160</u>
Exploiting Plant-Microbiomes Networks and Synthetic Communities to improve Crops Fitness (CropBiomes)	<u>CA22158</u>
Reproductive Enhancement of CROP resilience to extreme climate (RECROP)	CA22157
European metal-organic framework network: combining research and development to promote technological solutions (EU4MOFs)	CA22147
Harnessing the potential of underutilized crops to promote sustainable food production (DIVERSICROP)	<u>CA22146</u>
Beneficial root-associated microorganisms for sustainable agriculture (ROOT-BENEFIT)	<u>CA22142</u>
Integrated DSS for delivery of ecosystem services based on EU forest policies (DSS4ES)	<u>CA22141</u>
Improved Knowledge Transfer for Sustainable Insect Breeding (Insect-IMP)	<u>CA22140</u>
Pan-European Network of Green Deal Agriculture and Forestry Earth Observation Science (PANGEOS)	<u>CA22136</u>
Sustainable Network for agrofood loss and waste prevention, management, quantification and valorisation (FoodWaStop)	<u>CA22134</u>
Supramolecular LUminescent Chemosensors for Environmental Security (LUCES)	<u>CA22131</u>
InsectAI - Using Image-based AI for Insect Monitoring & Conservation (InsectAI)	CA22129
Rethinking the Blue Economy: Socio-Ecological Impacts and Opportunities (RethinkBlue)	CA22122
A European flyway research network for the effective conservation of migrant landbirds (EUFLYNET)	CA22117
European Network on Livestock Phenomics (EU-LI-PHE)	<u>CA22112</u>
Medicinal plants for animal health care: Translating tradition into modern veterinary medicine (MedPlants4Vet)	<u>CA22109</u>



BEekeeping products valorization and biomonitoring for the SAFEty of BEEs and	CA22105
HONEY (BeSafeBeeHoney)	
European Network In CHEmical Ecology: translating the language of life into	<u>CA22102</u>
sustainability (E-NICHE)	

How can I participate?

- Read the Project Description MoU
- Inform the Main Proposer/Chair of your interest (via email)
- Apply to join your Working Groups of interest
- Please note, Management Committee nominations are carried out through the COST National Contact Points (for UK this is: Mr Herbee Thomas, +44 (0) 207 215 8356; cost@beis.gov.uk)

The COST scheme is independent of Horizon Europe. UK applicants are eligible.

OECD CRP Call for Conference Sponsorship and Fellowship Awards in 2024

The OECD Cooperative Research Programme (CRP) on Sustainable Agricultural and Food Systems has opened its <u>Call for applications</u> for international conference sponsorship and research fellowship grants to be funded in 2024. The closing date for submission of applications is Sunday 10 September 2023 (midnight, Paris time, CET).

The UK is amongst the 28 OECD countries participating in the CRP, which supports research collaboration related to the sustainable use of natural resources in agriculture, food, forestry and fisheries. Applications should fit in to one of the following three research themes, full details of which can be found in the CRP's research theme document:

- 1. Managing natural capital
- 2. Strengthening resilience in the face of multiple risks in a connected world
- 3. Transformational technologies and innovation

The CRP normally **supports up to 10 conferences and around 20 fellowships each year**; details are available of <u>conferences</u> and <u>fellowships</u> supported since 2018.

- The **Conference sponsorship scheme** aims to inform policy makers, industry and academia of current and future research, scientific developments and opportunities on issues relevant to the CRP and to OECD's policy priorities CRP funding supports the costs of invited speakers.
- **Fellowships** aim to strengthen the international exchange of ideas and increase international mobility and cooperation.

The CRP provides support through bursaries covering travel and subsistence costs to research scientists with 4 years postdoctoral training and who have a long-term renewable position. Fellowships may be from 6 to 26 weeks.

Call for Papers - BIOKET 5

BIOKET is dedicated to bio-based solutions and processes, tackling technological, economic and environmental challenges of the Bioeconomy. The 2023 edition of the conference (<u>program</u>) gathered about 400 international delegate to highlight bio-based process innovations from pilot to early commercial

scale, examining how Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) drive innovation throughout the economy, and in particular the circular bioeconomy. The 5th edition of BIOKET, organized by Bioeconomy For Change (B4C), will take place on March 19-21st, 2024 in Reims, France. The <u>Call for Papers</u> is currently open, with a deadline of September 29th, 2023.





The Northern Ireland Contact Point Network

The Northern Ireland Contact Point (NICP) network was set up in 2014 to support local applicants applying for European Horizon funding. Details are available on the network's website which has been updated for Horizon Europe. Services offered by the NICPs include:

- ➤ **Guidance** on choosing relevant Horizon topics and types of action
- > Advice on administrative procedures and contractual issues
- > Training, assistance and advice on proposal writing, to improve the quality of proposals
- > Signpost to documentation (forms, guidelines, manuals etc.) and other supports available
- > Assistance in partner searches

NICP Network Bulletin

NICP Horizon Europe Newsletter Issue 2 (November 2022) is now available on the NICP website here. Issue 3 is under development. You can sign up with email subscription for the NICP Network Bulletin at https://horizoneuropeni.com/ and follow us on Twitter @HORIZONEUROPENI

NICP Cluster 6 Newsletter

Previous editions of this Cluster 6 newsletter are available for download: https://horizoneuropeni.com/cluster-6-newsletter-archive/



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