

The *Quality beyond Regulations* policy review was initiated to support countries and jurisdictions to understand and enhance quality in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings. This policy review places a particular focus on policies that support the quality of children’s daily interactions through their ECEC settings, including with other children, staff/teachers, space and materials, their families and the wider community, known as *process quality*. This note discusses several policy levers that are at the core of children’s daily experiences in ECEC, making them important for understanding quality beyond the complex governance and regulatory systems that surround ECEC.

## Luxembourg

### Key findings

In Luxembourg, 87% of children aged 3 to 5 were enrolled in the ECEC sector in 2018, which is similar to the OECD average (88%). In 2017, 59% of children under age 3 were enrolled in some form of ECEC, significantly above the OECD average. Annual expenditure per child at the pre-primary level is the second-highest among OECD countries.

The provision of ECEC in Luxembourg includes “formal” ECEC with three years of pre-primary education (from age 3) and “non-formal” ECEC serving children from birth in a wide variety of settings. Since 2013, the responsibility of the whole ECEC sector, as well as the later stages of the education system, is under the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth. Free access to pre-primary education is long-standing in Luxembourg and is now also offered to all children from age 1 for 20 hours per week in non-formal settings and 26 hours per week in pre-primary settings.

Two curriculum frameworks co-exist for ECEC in Luxembourg, both of which are compulsory. One curriculum framework covers both pre-primary and primary school, from ages 3 to 12. The other curriculum framework applies to non-formal ECEC. Both frameworks share a child-centred approach and a commitment to enhancing diversity, inclusion and multilingualism, and place a strong emphasis on play. With three national languages, multilingualism is an important component of life in Luxembourg, including for ECEC. Since 2017, the use of both French and Luxembourgish is required in non-formal centre-based settings receiving public funding for all children aged 1 and over, as well as in formal ECEC. Process quality is given a central place in both curricula, but enhancing the monitoring of their implementation remains a priority for the government.

Teachers working in pre-primary settings are required to have a bachelor’s qualification (International Standard Classification of Education [ISCED] Level 6), whereas in non-formal ECEC, staff are required to have an ISCED Level 4 qualification. None of the initial education and training programmes includes a strong focus on ECEC, but they all require practicum. The relatively low qualifications for staff in the non-formal sector can be a challenge for implementing the high level of quality now required.

Professional development for all staff working with children, including assistants, is regulated both in terms of content and number of hours. Protected time is given to all ECEC staff outside of their time

working with children. Working conditions, particularly salaries and working hours, differ across settings in the sector.

The responsibility for monitoring ECEC settings is split across several inspection bodies, according to the type of monitoring (structural or process quality) and the type of settings (non-formal or formal). All settings are monitored at least once a year.

## Governance, standards and funding

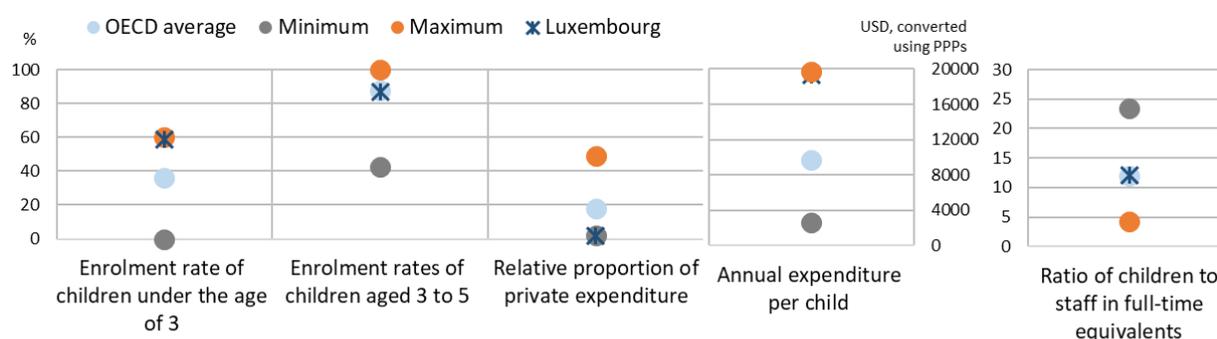
In Luxembourg, 87% of children aged 3 to 5 were enrolled in pre-primary settings in 2018, similar to the OECD average (88%). In 2017, 59% of children under age 3 were enrolled in ECEC services, substantially above the comparable OECD average for that year (36%). Annual expenditure per child at the pre-primary level is the second-highest among OECD countries. This high level of investment for this age group is reflected in the prevalence of public ECEC settings, entitlements to free ECEC for all children and favourable ratios of children-to-staff. From age 3, children have free access to 26 hours per week of ECEC through the schooling sector, and the share of private ECEC provision for children aged 3 to 5 (11%) is well below the OECD average (33%). The ratio of children to teaching staff is 12 to 1 for ISCED Level 0, in line with the OECD average (12 to 1).

ECEC provision is split between the “non-formal” sector, for children from birth, and the “formal” sector for children aged 3 and above. The non-formal sector includes ECEC for young children before they begin pre-primary education, as well as services for children up to age 12 for hours outside of school. The formal ECEC sector, pre-primary education, is part of the foundational education stage (*l'école fondamentale*) together with primary school. Formal ECEC comprises one first optional but legally entitled year (*éducation précoce*) at age 3 followed by two compulsory years of pre-primary education, enabling Luxembourg to reach near-universal enrolment in ECEC starting at age 4. Non-formal ECEC involves both centre-based and home-based settings, with a variety of types of providers, including public providers (e.g. municipalities), private non-profit and for-profit ones. Since 2013, a single authority, the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth (*Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse, MENJE*), is responsible for implementing formal ECEC and guaranteeing non-formal ECEC through a licensing and service agreement process.

Multilingualism and diversity are part of Luxembourg's identity, with three official languages (Luxembourgish, French and German) and 48% of the population being foreign citizens. Ensuring high-quality ECEC and access for all children has been a primary objective of recent policies. In the non-formal sector, equity and quality goals have been advanced by linking the quality requirements to the funding system (*chèque service accueil, CSA*). The CSA reduces fees to families according to their situation, enabling the most disadvantaged children access to free full-time ECEC. Since 2017, all children aged 1 to 4 are entitled to 20 free hours per week of ECEC in CSA-funded settings, addressing one of the government's goals to acquaint children more with both French and Luxembourgish. Since the introduction of the CSA system in 2009, there has been considerable growth in the number of settings in the non-formal ECEC sector. During this time, policies have also transformed the non-formal ECEC landscape with a progressive shift from focusing exclusively on childcare to support working parents to an approach that places the child at the centre.

Figure 1. Enrolment rates, funding and standards: Luxembourg

2018



Notes: Minimum and maximum values are across OECD countries. Data in this figure only include the formal education sector in Luxembourg, with the exception of the enrolment rate of children under the age of 3. In a majority of countries, including Luxembourg, enrolment rates of children under the age of 3 in ECEC only consider settings meeting ISCED Level 0 criteria. The reference year for data on the enrolment rate of children under the age of 3 in Luxembourg is 2017 due to missing data for 2018. Data on annual expenditure per child and relative proportion of private expenditure include only data on pre-primary education (ISCED Level 02), as data on early childhood educational development (ISCED Level 01) is missing.

The reference year is 2017 for relative proportion of private expenditure on early childhood education and care and annual expenditure per child.

Source: OECD (2020<sup>[1]</sup>), *Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>.

## Curriculum and pedagogy

In Luxembourg, there are two curriculum frameworks in place: the National Reference Framework for Non-formal Education for Children and Youth (*Cadre de référence nationale sur l'éducation non-formelle des enfants et des jeunes*), which covers children aged 0 to 12 in the non-formal education sector, and an integrated National Curriculum for Pre-primary and Primary Education (*Plan d'études pour l'École Fondamentale*), which covers children aged 3 to 12 in pre-primary and primary school. In addition, the Reference Framework for Non-compulsory Formal ECEC (*Plan-cadre pour l'Éducation précoce*) addresses age-specific goals for children aged 3 to 4. These curricula are compulsory for their corresponding settings.

In both curricula for formal and non-formal education, the goals for children's development are expressed as a mix of broad strands of concepts/competencies, principles and values and traditional learning areas. Both curricula are aligned on some core values, including a child-centred approach, and share principles such as around inclusion, diversity and multilingualism. The curriculum for formal education follows a competency-based approach organised in six learning areas that are consistent with those defined in the curriculum for non-formal education.

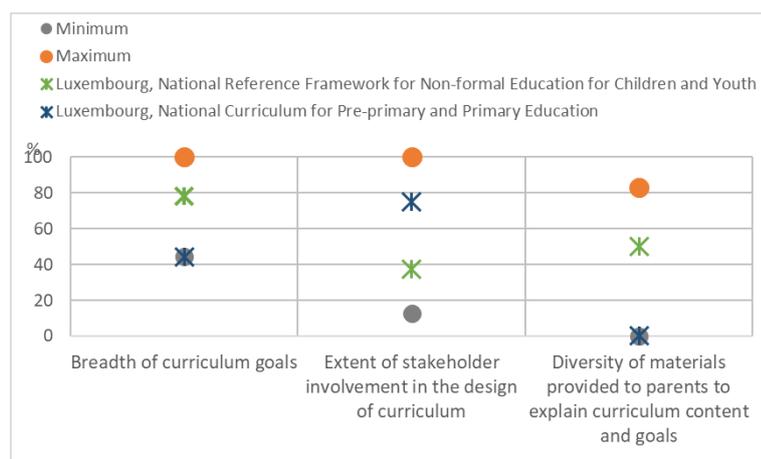
The goals of the curriculum for non-formal education are broad, including providing guidance on goals for children, the role of teachers, activities and materials to be used with children, as well as the importance of co-operation with families and communities. In the curriculum for formal education, goals are less broad and focus on goals for children, and more specifically on fostering children's skills, knowledge, competencies or attitudes. Whereas this curriculum aims to provide guidance to facilitate education continuity and transitions, this is not a stated goal of the current framework for non-formal education. However, the revised version of this curriculum framework, to be released in the second half of 2021, includes a special chapter on transitions.

Both curricula aim to support the quality of children’s interactions with ECEC staff and other children, as well as with the environment. They also support relationships between children and staff with parents, families and communities. Both curricula also provide guidance to support quality interactions between children and indoor and outdoor spaces as well as with materials. Process quality is therefore given a central place in both curricula. In the design of the curriculum framework for non-formal education, three types of stakeholders were included (central government ministry/agency, researchers and associations of ECEC professionals), while in the design of the curriculum for the formal sector, a broader range of stakeholders was involved (including also ECEC staff, parents and community groups). Like most countries and jurisdictions participating in the survey, Luxembourg did not involve children in the design of these curricula.

Both curricula are accompanied by guidelines that aim to support their implementation. In the case of the curriculum for non-formal education, these guidelines are targeted at both ECEC settings and parents, whereas in the formal education curriculum, they target ECEC settings only. In non-formal ECEC, different publications on the curriculum framework are developed specifically for families. ECEC staff can flexibly implement the curricula and adapt them to meet children’s needs and the characteristics of the local context, but both curricula strongly promote the use of play for children’s learning and development.

**Figure 2. Features of curriculum frameworks and pedagogy: Luxembourg**

2019



Mandatory external monitoring of curricula, Luxembourg	National Reference Framework for Non-formal Education for Children and Youth	<b>Yes</b>
	National Curriculum for Pre-primary and Primary Education	<b>Yes</b>
Percentage of curricula with mandatory external monitoring, all countries and jurisdictions		<b>50%</b>

Notes: *Breadth of curriculum goals* corresponds to the percentage of goals included in the policy questionnaire (nine goals in total) stated in the curriculum. Goals include, for instance, “to provide guidance on the holistic development, learning and well-being goals for children”, “to provide guidance that facilitates educational continuity and transitions”, and “to highlight the importance of co-operation with families to support the goals for children”.

*Extent of stakeholder involvement in the design of curriculum* corresponds to the percentage of actors (e.g. ECEC staff, parents, children, researchers – eight categories in total) involved in the development of the most recent version of the curriculum framework.

*Diversity of materials provided to parents to explain curriculum content and goals* corresponds to the percentage of types of material provided to parents to explain the content and goals of the curriculum (e.g. website, social media, meetings at the ECEC setting – six categories in total). Maximum, minimum and percentage values are taken over the 56 curriculum frameworks included in the survey.

Source: *Quality beyond Regulations* database.

## Workforce development

Teachers in formal ECEC are required to have a bachelor’s qualification (ISCED Level 6) in educational sciences, or an equivalent qualification delivered abroad. Assistants (with an ISCED Level 4 qualification) work alongside teachers in classrooms of children in the first (non-compulsory) year of formal ECEC.

In non-formal ECEC, qualifications can range from ISCED Level 3 to ISCED Level 6 qualifications but regulations require settings to have a minimum of 60% of staff holding at least an ISCED Level 4 qualification. Prior work experience can be recognised in non-formal ECEC, enabling staff with lower initial qualifications to obtain the “educator” qualification. Leadership responsibilities in the formal ECEC sector are shared between regional directors, who are required to have a master’s degree (ISCED Level 7), and presidents of school committees, who are elected from among the teachers in their schools and therefore have the same qualification as teachers. Regional directors provide oversight and monitoring, whereas the school committee presidents focus more on day-to-day functioning and providing overall support for teachers in their schools. In non-formal settings, leaders can have a range of qualifications, from ISCED Level 4 to a bachelor’s degree (ISCED Level 6), depending on the number of children enrolled in the setting.

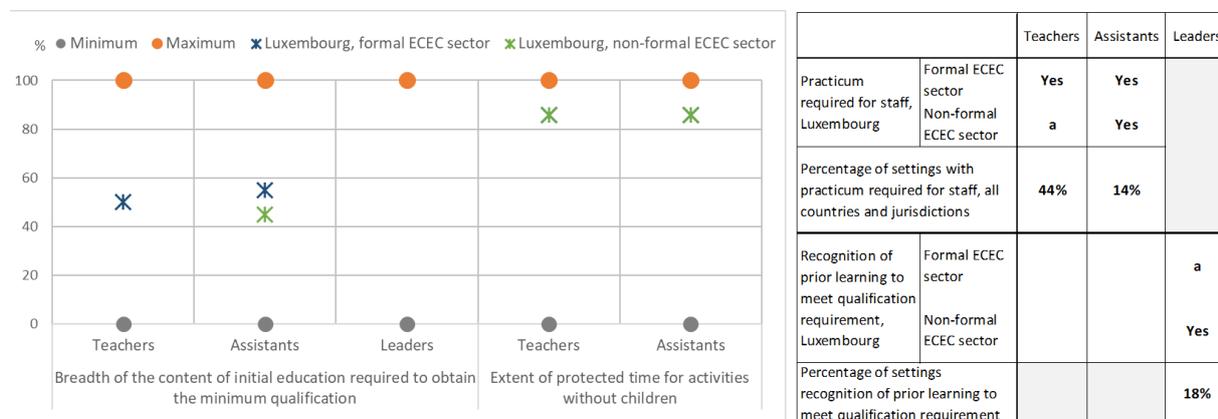
Initial training programmes for teachers and assistants are not specific to ECEC and cover a medium range of topics, compared with training programmes in other countries. Notably, trainings on transitions and on family and community engagement are not part of the required training for ECEC staff in Luxembourg. However, pre-service training for both assistants and teachers, in the whole ECEC sector (formal and non-formal), includes a practicum component. Training for teachers entering the formal ECEC sector is co-ordinated with the Ministry of Education to ensure consistency with the National Curriculum for Pre-primary and Primary Education. Efforts are being made to ensure the non-formal national curriculum framework will be better integrated within staff pre-training.

Professional development is regulated, with requirements to participate for all categories of ECEC staff working with children, and protected time is granted for these activities. In non-formal ECEC, 32 hours of professional development over 2 years is required for all staff working with children and is linked to the eligibility for the CSA funding programme. Starting in 2022, coaching and mentoring for staff will be financed by the government up to a maximum of hours, depending on the size of the settings. For home-based ECEC providers, 40 hours of ongoing training every 2 years is required. The content of training for staff in the non-formal sector has to be consistent with the national framework curriculum. Specific trainings to support multilingualism and inclusion programmes are also offered. In formal ECEC, compulsory ongoing training (40 hours per year for assistants, 48 hours over 3 years for teachers) follows the priorities defined by the Ministry of Education and is offered mainly through the National Institute for Continuous Professional Development.

Pre-primary teachers working in the public formal sector have the highest salaries of ECEC teachers in all OECD countries, and they have a relatively low number of teaching days (176 days per year) compared to other OECD countries (194 days per year, on average) (OECD, 2020<sup>[1]</sup>). Workforce conditions differ between teachers in formal ECEC and other categories of ECEC staff, as well as between public and private settings. Staff shortages and high turnover rates within non-formal ECEC are challenges identified by Luxembourg. Nonetheless, in both formal and non-formal ECEC, teachers and assistants have protected time for more activities outside their work with children than in many other countries. Specifically, staff in Luxembourg receive protected time for six of the seven activities that were listed in the *Quality beyond Regulations* questionnaire, including professional development, documenting children’s development, reflecting on work and participating in staff meetings.

Figure 3. . Features of ECEC workforce development: Luxembourg

2019



Notes: *Breadth of the content of initial education required to obtain the minimum qualification* corresponds to the percentage of content areas required to obtain the minimum qualification among the 20 considered areas that can be grouped into the following categories: child development; child health; curriculum and pedagogy; playful learning; classroom management; diversity; transitions; and family and community engagement. *Extent of protected time* corresponds to the percentage of tasks for which there is protected time among the seven following tasks, namely: individual planning or preparing play and/or learning activities; collaborating and speaking with colleagues and parents or guardians within this ECEC setting; documenting children's development, well-being and learning; participating in the ECEC setting management, staff meetings and general administrative work (including communication, paperwork and other clerical duties); attending professional development activities; reflecting on work; laundry, tidying-up, cleaning, shopping or cooking.

Grey cell: information not asked for this category of staff.

"a": not applicable.

Source: OECD *Quality beyond Regulations* database.

## Data and monitoring

With several types of ECEC settings, monitoring is crucial to ensure high quality for the whole sector. Structural quality for non-formal ECEC settings (e.g. staff-child ratios, staff qualifications, space requirements, hygiene and safety) is monitored by national inspectors from the Ministry of Education with checks before licensing and regularly thereafter. Process quality is monitored by two separate bodies: regional officers from the National Youth Service (*Service National de la Jeunesse*) for non-formal ECEC and regional directors for formal ECEC. External monitoring of curriculum framework implementation takes place at least once a year for both formal and non-formal ECEC. In both the formal and non-formal sectors, monitoring of curriculum implementation relies on inspections and staff self-assessments, but not on tests for staff or peer reviews. In the formal ECEC sector, monitoring also uses child assessment and portfolio reviews, while in the non-formal ECEC sector, monitoring includes surveys. The integrated authority for all ECEC provision within the Ministry of Education allows for co-operation between the different departments.

Since 2016, non-formal ECEC settings are required to develop a "pedagogical concept" that explicitly addresses or sets out process quality within settings, local environment considerations, self-assessment procedures and staff training plans. Process quality inspections in non-formal settings are carried out twice a year by regional officers and follow a precisely defined procedure, ensuring: 1) the pedagogical concept of the setting is in line with the national curriculum framework; 2) implementation of the pedagogical concept is well documented in a compulsory logbook; and 3) a training plan is designed for each staff member according to requirements for ongoing professional development. Interactions between ECEC staff, children, parents and materials are not directly monitored in non-formal ECEC by regional officers. In pre-primary settings, regional directions monitor process quality by visiting teachers and working with elected school committees. In formal ECEC, interactions between staff and children, among children and

between children and materials are monitored. Monitoring of interactions involving parents or communities is an area that can be further strengthened.

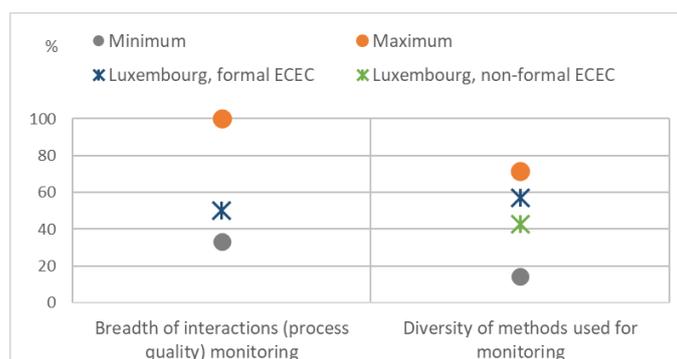
The Ministry of Education has started to co-operate with vocational schools to improve initial education on curriculum implementation for ECEC staff preparing to enter the non-formal sector and for assistants in the formal sector. Those preparing to work as teachers in the formal ECEC system attend the University of Luxembourg, which has autonomy to define the content of teacher training, but exchanges regularly with the Ministry of Education.

In the non-formal sector, professional development for staff is monitored by regional officers, who are in charge of checking compliance with the training plan for staff working with children. A commission on professional development (*Commission de la formation continue*) accredits courses based on consistency with the curriculum framework for non-formal education, although starting in 2022, the accreditation process will also take into account additional criteria in order to better adapt trainings to staff needs. Plans for the reorganisation of the professional development system in 2022 also include conducting monitoring of training courses quality and of training providers' qualifications.

In the formal ECEC sector, participation in professional development is monitored by the regional directors. To be counted towards the compulsory hours of professional development, courses for staff must be consistent with the curriculum for formal education and with the priorities defined by the Ministry of Education.

**Figure 4. Features of the monitoring system: Luxembourg**

2019



Notes: *Breadth of interactions (process quality) monitoring* corresponds to the percentage of types of interactions monitored among the seven considered types of interactions: between ECEC staff and children; among children; between children and the materials in ECEC settings; between ECEC staff and parents; between children and their communities; and between parents and children.

*Diversity of methods used for monitoring* corresponds to the percentage of methods used for monitoring among the six following methods: inspection; staff self-assessment/evaluation; portfolios; surveys; peer reviews; and child assessments.

Maximum, minimum and percentage values are taken over 108 settings included in the survey.

Source: OECD *Quality beyond Regulations* database.

## What is the *Quality beyond Regulations* project and how does it apply in Luxembourg?

The *Quality beyond Regulations* policy review was initiated to support countries and jurisdictions to better understand the different dimensions of quality in early childhood education and care, focusing on process quality in particular. The first phase of the project culminated in a literature review and meta-analysis of the links between different dimensions of quality and children's learning, development and well-being, published under the title *Engaging Young Children* (OECD, 2018<sub>[2]</sub>).

The second phase of the project builds on this research base to address the overarching question: How can policies enhance process quality and child development and what are good examples of these policies? To address this question, countries in the OECD’s Early Childhood Education and Care Network were invited to share information on relevant policies by completing a questionnaire. Twenty-six countries responded to this invitation, resulting in a rich database of information on ECEC systems around the world and their efforts to promote high-quality ECEC as of the year 2019.

In addition, six countries (Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg and Switzerland) participated in the *Quality beyond Regulations* project by completing in-depth country background reports. These reports were undertaken by national governments, as well as provincial governments in Canada. The reports were based on a common framework developed by the OECD to facilitate comparative analysis and maximise the opportunities for countries and jurisdictions to learn from each other. The country background reports are complementary to the information collected in the policy questionnaire, and together, these two sources provide the data for the main analyses presented in this publication.

This note builds on information provided by Luxembourg through the policy questionnaire and its country background report as well as other international databases (i.e. the OECD Education at a Glance database). In the policy questionnaire, Luxembourg reported information on two curriculum frameworks (the National Reference Framework for Non-formal Education for Children and Youth; and the National Curriculum for Pre-primary and Primary Education) and four types of ECEC settings, two in the non-formal sector (nurseries for children aged 0 to 4; education and care services for children aged 4 to 6) and two in the formal sector (pre-primary year 1 for children aged 3 to 4; pre-primary years 2 and 3 for children aged 4 to 6).

In the *Quality beyond Regulations* project, the term “teachers” refers to the individuals with the most responsibility for a group of children at the class- or playroom-level. They may also be called pedagogues, educators, childcare practitioners or pedagogical staff. The term “assistants” refers to ECEC staff whose role is to provide support to the teachers or lead staff member with a group of children. The term “leader” refers to the person who has the most responsibility for administrative, managerial and/or pedagogical leadership at the ECEC centres. In Luxembourg, the “teacher” category corresponds to teachers in the formal sector as well as educators in the non-formal sector. The “assistant” category refers to educators working in both sectors.

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