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Timber buying policies in Europe, ATIBT and WWF France place tropical wood firmly back at the heart of the action

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SPECIAL ISSUE

TIMBER BUYING POLICIES IN EUROPE

February 2015

On the newswire!

ASSOCIATION TECHNIQUE INTERNATIONALE DES BOIS TROPICAUX

atibt

**Timber buying policies in Europe,
ATIBT and WWF France place tropical
wood firmly back at the heart of the
action**



Photo © Ana Lisa Alperovich for Inhabitat

An increasing number of retailers and brand owners have started to require their suppliers to provide wood products from responsible sources.





Photo © Ana Lisa Alperovich for Inhabitat

Many public procurement policies make certification a prerequisite for selecting suppliers of construction materials.



INTERVIEWS

ATIBT is already working closely with WWF France, on the “wood barometer” initiative for 2015. Where do things stand on responsible timber buying in Europe?





ATIBT and WWF France partner on public procurement "wood barometer" 2015

By ATIBT, Mar 2 2015 02:25PM

What WWF France is in the process of doing with ATIBT through the "public sector timber" barometer survey is determining whether or not an environmental policy on timber purchasing exists. Jean Bakouma, Responsable du Pôle Forêt, WWF France, presents the initiative.



Jean Bakouma, Responsable du Pôle Forêt, WWF France

ATIBT: A barometer is an instrument for measuring changes in something and showing trends. Why a timber barometer for 2015?

Jean Bakouma: Each year we develop tools to evaluate the environmental performance of businesses. For businesses involved in buying and selling timber, we have brought out "timber barometers". **We have done a lot of work on these barometers with private companies, such as Castorama, Leroy Merlin, IKEA, etc. and we have evaluated their policies to find out whether they are able to implement the European Illegal Timber Directive 995/2010**

prohibiting the marketing of illegal timber. Alongside these private studies, we have formed a partnership with ATIBT (International Technical Tropical Timber Organisation), as part of the ECOFORAF (support for eco-certification of concessions in Central Africa) project for promoting the market for certified tropical woods in Europe and particularly in France; together with FSC, we have written a Responsible Timber Buying Guide for local authorities, available [here](#).

ATIBT: What is it intended to demonstrate compared to the 2014 barometer?

Jean Bakouma: This time, it is a "public sector timber" barometer for local authorities, to gather information that will enable us to rank them on their environmental performance regarding responsible timber buying - especially construction wood. The rankings will then form the basis of recommendations, on the same lines as this guide. It is therefore a way of encouraging local authorities to use the [Guide](#).

ATIBT: Decisions on purchasing wood products and wood derivatives can have major consequences for biodiversity. What is at stake here?

Jean Bakouma: The public sector in France accounts for ca. 25% of wood purchases, so that is one quarter of all timber bought. This is not insignificant. It often involves types of timber used in construction, which from my point of view is also a sector that poses a high risk in terms of purchasing timber, since there isn't an automatic connection between purchasers and users within the same organisation. That is to say that the group of people buying timber, who are often based in the organisation's headquarters, order timber to be delivered direct to the building site. This brings risks with it, because **the people running the building sites, who are very busy people with rules to be adhered to other than those on construction timber, do not pay a lot of attention to the environmental quality of the wood delivered.** So tackling the public sector timber purchasing process also indirectly tackles the building industry, which uses timber that has a high probability of being illegal in origin, or timber that is likely to have been harvested in a way that is harmful to biodiversity. Now, forests account for 80% of the world's biodiversity. That's why the challenge is serious.

ATIBT: Is a responsible purchasing policy in itself sufficient to ensure that the timber selected comes from responsibly managed forests? Are there any other mechanisms that could be considered?

Jean Bakouma: In France there is a circular dating back to 2008 which requires public sector purchases of timber to have reached a level of 100% certified timber or at least timber sourced from sustainably managed forests. Today, five years on, **France has no assessment mechanism for establishing whether timber bought by the public sector is certified timber or timber harvested responsibly.** This deficiency suggests that the public sector's environmental responsibility targets have not been met. However, these assessment mechanisms exist in the paper industry. The discrepancy is due to a lack of resources: the timber industry is understaffed. Staff has only just now been recruited as a result of the European illegal timber law. But recruitment and training take time. On top of that, there is a lack of knowledge: most public sector buyers have a very poor knowledge of

environmental certification labels for timber. If the timber comes from a sustainably managed forest, that is the only guarantee they need. Whereas, in fact, it is nowhere close to being enough: a forest is only sustainably managed if its management is subject to a system of certification by an independent third party. **So what we are in the process of doing with ATIBT through the "public sector timber" barometer survey is determining whether or not an environmental policy on timber purchasing exists - which is directly linked to responsible timber buying.** If local authorities have no such policy, there is a pretty high chance that their purchases are not responsibly sourced. Some local authorities, in Strasbourg, have already taken steps to make this commitment and I have received their report, without even having to ask. A laudable initiative in terms of transparency and good policy. Authorities in the north west of France have drawn up a Charter to manage their purchasing policy and lay down guidelines for it. Unfortunately, the gap must be bridged between information on local, temperate wood and tropical wood, especially when it comes to labels.

ATIBT: How important is it to have a purchasing policy?

Jean Bakouma: If you have no policy, you lack vision: then you just go along with accepted thinking. Having a timber purchasing policy means you are already aware of the value of forests and the resources they produce. It is not through the use of competing products of chemical origin that we will save the forest. We will save the forest because it has a value: we therefore have to realise that value and use its timber as a condition of ensuring its survival. Certification enables us to realise the value of the resources of the forest. **In France, the government is encouraging the private sector to buy certified timber. Certification, however, has a much higher cost on the market as opposed to non-certified wood. This is not much of an incentive for buyers, who consider certification as a must. If the government gave tax incentives to certified enterprises, that would help buyers and companies and would transform the market.** Certified wood must become the norm on the market. This can only be achieved if public authorities contribute to this in one way or another.

ATIBT: How will the results be evaluated? When will they be made available?

Jean Bakouma: We are in the process of gathering the data. The survey is made up of some 20 questions. These questions will enable us to prepare performance indicators. The purpose of the barometer is to enable us to assess the environmental performance of public and private sector organisations by means of a ranking. And then to rank them in order to challenge them. **This, of course, marks a change of approach: instead of only staging demonstrations with banners, we shall give the best organisations the recognition they deserve, while at the same time spotting the "bad students".** The next step is to process the data, starting in March. This will enable us to publish a report by the end of June, containing recommendations and giving credit to those organisations and communities that have performed the best.



WWF Germany brings an overview of available forensic methods to help companies better control tropical wood supplies

By ATIBT, Mar 2 2015 02:25PM

WWF Germany has tested several pieces of garden furniture made out of tropical wood. Take a look at the findings here: <http://bit.ly/1vSMi4Z>. ATIBT has interviewed Johannes Zahnen, Global Forest Trade & Network Coordinator, Germany.



Johannes Zahnen, Global Forest Trade & Network Coordinator, Germany

ATIBT: In Germany, public procurement promotes the use of responsibly sourced wood. Do public procurement norms currently include checking the actual wood provenance/origin?

Johannes Zahnen: The German public procurement document states that wood based products should be from sustainable sources. WWF welcomes the fact that the German Government states that they want to buy, and with that promote, products from sustainable wood sources. We would appreciate if they would give priority to the most ambitious certification systems, to even more use public procurement to stimulate the production of sustainable products. **Unfortunately, there is no knowledge about the implementation and success of the public procurement in Germany.**

In a public hearing the German Government admitted, that they do not have any figures about actual procurement of certified wood products (see [here](#), question 13).

ATIBT: What are the instruments/methods available to perform checks on wood origin? What are the most promising ones? Does the law recognize any of these?

Johannes Zahnen: Since 2004, WWF Germany has been intensively addressing illegal wood trade and how to use forensic methods to filter suspicious wood. WWF Germany has run several projects to prove that the stable isotope method – already established in the food sector - also works for wood (e.g.

http://www.wwf.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Bilder/Final_Report_project_DBU_WWF_wood_fingerprinting_11_2011.pdf). Besides the **DNA fingerprinting** the **stable isotope method** is the most promising method to verify the declared origin of wood. WWF Germany already made use of them to prove Teak was coming from Burma. Another example is the EIA (environmental investigation agency) report on Oak from Russia (<http://eia-global.org/campaigns/forests-campaign/liquidating-the-forests/>). **WWF Germany also produced an overview of available forensic methods that also helps companies better understand state-of-the-art possibilities to control suppliers or to strengthen the company's risk assessment system** (see [here](#))

ATIBT: Which percentage of tropical wood enters Germany each year? In public tenders, is administrative personnel trained to ascertain wood origin or are they satisfied with the label?

Johannes Zahnen: According to ITTO, 53% of tropical forests are managed, most of which in an unsustainable manner. Besides unsustainable forestry there are different other factors that put forests under pressure. **Belgium, France, Netherlands, UK, Italy and Germany share 80 % of the European import of tropical wood (e.g. sawn wood, scantlings, flooring).** While German imports of these tropical wood products decreased, the total import of the same products increased in Europe mostly via NL and UK. In addition to that, there are many products like furniture partly containing tropical wood species. As the public hearing mentioned above brought to light that there is no documentation in Germany about any wood product procured from sustainable sources – **we can't estimate how well administrative personnel is trained to ascertain wood procurement according to public procurement rules.**

ATIBT: If the wood species is not correctly indicated on a product, who is held responsible – the producer or the certification body that gave it its label? Are there any sanctions?

Johannes Zahnen: This question touches different topics. If the false declaration is linked to a primary import into the EU ("operator"), this would mean a false declaration according to EUTR (regardless of any certificate). The Competent Authority could question the due diligence system of the importer that includes the knowledge of wood species, wood origin and risk assessment. **False declaration of wood species of a certified product would likely be in conflict with certification standards and result in penalties from CARs (corrective action requests) up to suspension of the certificate depending on the seriousness of the infringement.**



WWF UK: Empowering people to take action and be part of the solution for forests

By ATIBT, Mar 2 2015 02:23PM

If people realized that the price they pay is a reflection of many investments, like health and safety for workers, creating a future resource to harvest, making sure water is protected for communities - they may be more prepared to pay extra. Are UK shoppers adequately informed? Julia Young, Manager, WWF Global Forest and Trade Network UK, answers.



Julia Young, Manager, WWF Global Forest and Trade Network UK

ATIBT: The public is increasingly aware of sustainable fish and fairtrade coffee. But is it the same for knowing about the source of tropical timber products they might buy, such as bed bases, flooring or garden chairs? Can UK shoppers tell if what they are buying comes from legal sources?

Julia Young: Although some years ago the press covered news of how some goods could be causing negative impacts on tropical forests, we largely assume that these days are behind us and the problems have been addressed. But this perception is largely because the issue has died down, not because it has gone away. **Shoppers aren't provided with much information that enables them to find out where these kind of goods come from, and if they are legal and sustainable. There is still very little specific information available to shoppers, and especially very little in actual stores or on product labels.** So I'd have to conclude that the public isn't getting the same exposure to understanding that this is an ongoing concern. Shoppers should be empowered to make better choices – and they can help get stores to share more information by asking questions and insisting on information for their products, like is it from a well-managed, robustly certified forest source – FSC and PEFC are the main forest certification schemes that customers may see products on the shelves from - and can the business prove it. This can prompt a business to change and in the long term help improve the future for forests.

ATIBT: Timber is a consumer-led demand market. Do UK shoppers stand ready to pay premium prices for tropical wood issued from responsibly managed forests?

Julia Young: I think if people realized that the price they pay is a reflection of many investments made by people in the supply chain, related to many factors, like health and safety for workers, creating a future resource to harvest, making sure water is protected for communities - they may be more prepared to pay extra to ensure their goods come from sustainable sources. We are living in a throw-away society, with prices based on being cheap in the short term, but perhaps people make more repeat buys than they used to – so aren't necessarily saving money in the long term. We need to consume more wisely, and make the most of our resources and reduce wastefulness. There is a lot of research shared by retailers which shows that people care but don't want to pay more. Then it is up to the companies to make sure that they are charging a price which isn't based on the bare minimum, and that exploitation or over pressuring – either of other people, or their resources is eliminated. We also need to value the uniqueness of some of these resources and the people and nature they support – like in tropical forests worldwide, and accept that **if we love products from those places and want them in our home, we must also help secure them for the future by paying a fair price for our products.**

ATIBT: How is WWF UK campaigning to increase public awareness on responsible forest trade?

Julia Young: We have a major forest campaign right now – to help stop forests disappearing. We want people to understand there is still a lot to be done to make sure our purchase of timber and timber products is contributing positively to forests value and future. People can contact their MP for example, to share their views on why we need to keep illegal timber and timber products out of the market, and ask to make the current regulation on this stronger so that there aren't major exceptions for business having to take action. **People can also look for certified or recycled products, and ask their local authority, businesses they buy from, shops on the high street, schools, you name it, to confirm they are also playing their part in buying responsibly.** We have a dedicated web site for our Forest Campaign where people can find out more – just search for WWF Forest Campaign.

ATIBT: Where do things stand on public procurement policy? What can the government do to help?

Julia Young: From our perspective, UK government procurement action on responsible sourcing for timber and timber products can be described as patchy at best. Central government departments in the UK are required to source in line with the UK governments timber procurement policy which requires verified legal and sustainable goods to be bought, but this isn't adequately met, and is very poorly reported on to date. So certainly more can and does need to be done. **We've also worked with local authorities, to get their commitment to spend public money responsibly when it comes to buying timber** for projects, refurbishments on properties, grounds maintenance, paper for council use, and so on. **Definitely where timber from tropical forests is being used by government agencies, it must be bought from a credibly certified source.** We're looking into what mechanisms could be implemented by government to promote, incentivize and reinforce a sustainable market for timber in the UK – and if government buyers can meet their compliance requirements by better rating businesses who are doing well on sustainability for timber themselves, we can start the first steps of a win win situation that also changes the market permanently to a sustainable footing for forests.

ATIBT: What is the role NGOs can play in telling positive stories from the forests?

Julia Young: WWF definitely wants to inspire people about our amazing planet and its incredible biodiversity, and connect people and nature as we are so reliant on each other for our futures. So we already use a lot of imagery and communication to different audiences and through different channels, be it work with schools via lessons, or through our facebook pages for example, to do this. NGOs can bring forward stories of how positive change has come about as a result of every day, small actions on sustainability and choosing well. For example, we ran a short campaign called What Wood You Choose, where we put adverts at bus stops and in tube stations, helping people to understand that positive choices could make a difference to forests. And **we try to share good news about how forest certification, for example, is helping people in Congo basin forests be included more in forest management processes, and get more benefit from these activities.** Sometimes it does take shocking stories to make people realise that something is wrong and must be stopped – we don't disagree with doing this – but want to make sure it is followed up with stories and guidance that can help people take action themselves – to empower people to be part of the solution for forests. At WWF, we are also committed to working with responsible business, and encouraging them to differentiate themselves on the basis they are supporting forests for the future.



WWF Netherlands on public procurement "the Dutch way"

By ATIBT, Mar 2 2015 02:23PM

The price of alternative products, such as aluminum or plastic, often does not reflect higher energy costs and CO2 emissions. These should be included and taxed higher, according to Gijs Breukink, Coordinator Responsible Forestry, WWF Global Forest Programme, Netherlands.



Gijs Breukink, Coordinator Responsible Forestry, WWF Global Forest Programme

ATIBT: The Netherlands are one of Europe's most advanced countries when it comes to public procurement of tropical wood products. Why?

Gijs Breukink: Netherlands indeed is advanced. In the 1980s-90s the environmental NGOs were very vocal against use of non-sustainable/illegal tropical timber, which resonated well with the public and was picked up by political parties. In response, the Dutch Government adopted a procurement policy (to buy only sustainable timber) which includes tropical timber. Secondly, the government has defined what they call sustainable timber (TPAS). Thirdly, they have installed an independent committee to check if timber certification systems comply with TPAS. Finally, the government decides what is sustainable and **the parliament is active in checking the government whether they follow their own policy.** Companies were sensitive to both negative and positive PR and provided sufficient supply.

ATIBT: According to WWF Netherlands, what can be improved in order to better drive consumer demand towards wood products coming from sustainable sources?

Gijs Breukink: Governments (and companies) need to implement their procurement policies and enforce the EUTR, this will reduce the non-sustainable supply. This will direct supply towards sustainability and consumers will follow.

ATIBT: The Netherlands have a long-standing tradition of building with wood-based products. To which extent are hi-tech, alternative products a serious competitor?

Gijs Breukink: This is definitely an issue at the moment. The market share of tropical timber products is declining in favor of aluminum and plastics. This can have different reasons; the crisis, the image of tropical timber ("it causes deforestation"), it requires knowledge to work with timber and there is less and less specialism in the market available on this product.

We will have to find out the cause of this decline and then take action. **It is important for sustainable forest management that there is a demand for the products, otherwise the incentive to clear the forest in favour of the production of, for example palm oil, is tempting.**

If alternative products have the same or better specifications for the same or lower price, wood will lose market share. The price of these products often do not integrate environmental costs like energy/CO₂, which should be included, or higher taxed.



PUBLICATION

ITTO's Tropical Timber Market Report: Trends over 2013-2014 in Europe (pp. 19-23)

Chart 1: EU28 tropical wood product imports - Jan to Oct - 1000 m3 RWE

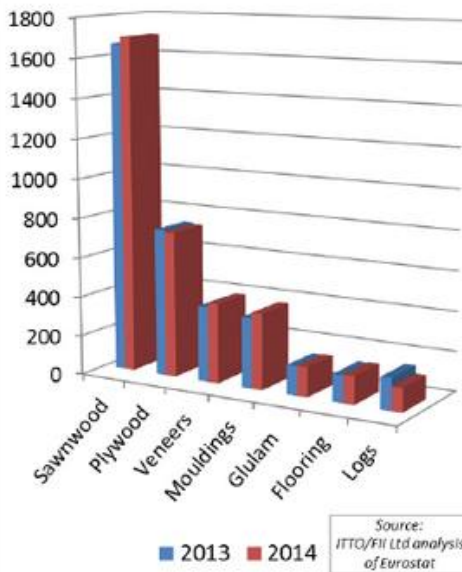
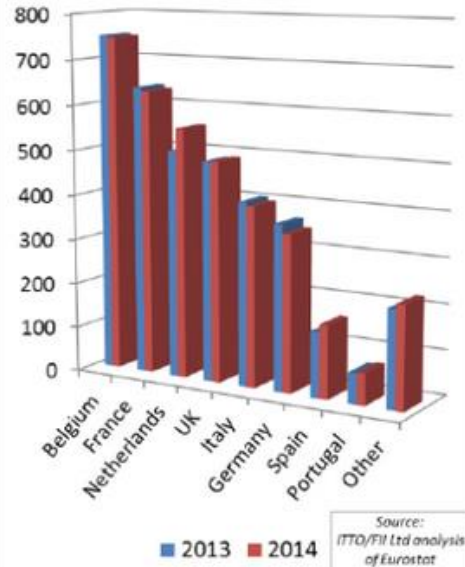


Chart 2: EU Member State tropical wood product imports - Jan to Oct - 1000 m3 RWE



FSC Forum on 25th March 2015 at the DOMOTEX Asia/CHINAFLOOR Trade Show in Shanghai, China - 2015年3月25日 | 上海新国际博览中心 E4馆

By ATIBT, Mar 2 2015 02:24PM

木材及木制品行业对可持续议题的关注在近年不断增加。越来越多的零售商和品牌开始要求他们的供应商提供负责任来源的林产品。世界很多国家的公共采购政策也将认证作为挑选供应商的前置条件。美国雷斯法案以及欧盟木材法案已经禁止向其市场销售非法木材。FSC®论坛将探讨FSC认证木材和木地板产品的市场趋势，介绍FSC认证如何帮助企业满足欧盟木材法案（EUTR）的“尽职调查”要求。来自知名企业、世界自然基金会全球森林贸易网络、FSC认证林场的代表将介绍其FSC认证的相关情况及市场展望。同时，论坛中也将由上海木材交易中心介绍上海罗泾木材自由贸易区的最新产业政策，并安排免费参观。



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The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) cordially invites you to attend the FSC Forum on 25th March 2015 at the DOMOTEX Asia/CHINAFLOOR Trade Show in Shanghai, China.

DOMOTEX Asia/CHINAFLOOR is the largest wood flooring trade exhibition, during its long and successful history, has obtained international recognition and influence. International buyers and sellers of woods and wooden products from 50 countries make up for 25.5% of a total of approximately 45,000 visitors that visit the show each year.

The US Lacey Act and the EU Timber Law outlaw illegal wood and wood products from their marketplaces. **Through this forum we will share the market development and trend for FSC-certified wood, and introduce how FSC certification can help fulfill “due diligence requirements” of the European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR).** Representatives of leading forest farms and companies will provide their perspectives on certified wood products and market.

Meanwhile, **the forum will introduce the newly-established Shanghai Luoqing Timber Free Trade Zone** and its benefits to timber traders worldwide. **A site tour will be organized by the Shanghai Timber Trading Center (STTC) in the afternoon.**

The registration for FSC Forum is free. Please register by [filling out the registration form](#) and emailing us at info@cn.fsc.org

For the site tour registration, please refer to the [attached Invitation for Site Tour](#) and register accordingly.

For any remaining question, feel free to contact Mrs. Elaine Yi, FSC China Key Account Manager (yi.lan@fsc.org).

Le Commerce du Bois officially appointed Monitoring Organisation for EUTR

Paris (France) - The European Commission has officially approved new operations as EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) Monitoring Organisations (MO), including ATIBT member Le Commerce du Bois (France). The approval of LCB means that it will now be able to make "official" its due diligence system, which its membership have been steadily implementing over the last two years.

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Right: Eric Boilley, President and Director, LCB at the Amsterdam Forum.

Photo © Joep Nisink / ATIBT



Wood N° 5



The oil ("bois de rose") possesses a characteristic aroma of great value to the cosmetic and fragrance industries – making it a sought-after ingredient in the more expensive perfumes such as Chanel no. 5 (launched in 1921, in the new "Coco Chanel" boutique in Champs-Élysées).

Rosewood oil is obtained by steam distilling the comminuted trunkwood. For many years, rosewood oil was an important source of natural linalool...

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Ilustración original de Béguin et al. 1985

ROSEWOOD :
data sheet

Rosewood (Aniba Rosaedora)

By ATIBT, Mar 2 2015 02:24PM

by Patrick Martin, Technical Director, ATIBT

Rosewood (ATIBT pilot name: bois de rose femelle) is a tree in the *Lauraceae* family. It is represented by the *Aniba Rosaedora* species. Vernacular names are: Rosewood, Pau Rosa, Licari Kanali. Rosewood must not be mistaken for construction wood or wood for cabinetmaking, commonly referred to as rosewood belonging to the *Dalbergia* species, or for *Machaerium*, *Trichilia* or *Swartzia* rosewood (included on the Appendix of CITES).

Habitat

Rosewood is indigenous to the Northern areas of Brazil, up to Peru (South-West) and Honduras (North-West). Natural reproduction is difficult owing to parrots feasting on its odorous seeds. Owing to sustained exploitation for its essential oil, rosewood is an endangered species risking extinction and it is ranked on Appendix II of CITES.

Properties

Rosewood is a thick wood, dark brown to red in colour. Long-established demand for its characteristic oil make interest in rosewood as a material scarce. The first records of the exploitation of the Brazilian rosewood date back to the 17th century, however the extraction process was introduced in 1875.



Photo: Antonio Marin Segovia / Flickr

Applications

The oil ("bois de rose") possesses a characteristic aroma of great value to the cosmetic and fragrance industries – making it a sought-after ingredient in the more expensive perfumes such as Chanel no. 5 (launched in 1921, in the new "Coco Chanel" boutique in Champs-Élysées).

Rosewood oil is obtained by steam distilling the comminuted trunkwood. For many years, rosewood oil was an important source of natural linalool. With the advent of synthetic linalool this use largely disappeared. However, according to some "Noses" one thing is clear: linalool derivatives will never compare to the essential oil distilled from the tree.



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Forum ATIBT save the date: week of 12/10!

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