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The TU Delft Strategic Planning Cycle

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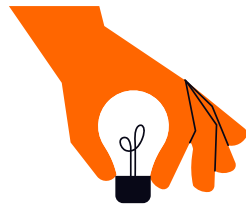Please check the document version above.

TU DELFT
STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE

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UP2030

COLOPHON

UP2030 SPATIAL PLANNING & DESIGN READY FOR 2030

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THE TU DELFT STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE

THIS BOOKLET IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SPATIAL JUSTICE MANUAL ORGANISED BY TU DELFT.

KEYWORDS: SPATIAL JUSTICE, SOCIO-TECHNICAL URBAN TRANSITIONS TO SUSTAINABILITY, JUST TRANSITIONS, CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, GOVERNANCE

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THE TUD STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE MODEL

INTRODUCTION

The TU Delft Strategic Planning Cycle is a comprehensive strategic planning model designed to enhance urban sustainability and inclusivity by incorporating a range of participatory tools and methodologies that facilitate broad stakeholder engagement through a detailed step-by-step planning cycle.

The TU Delft Strategic Planning Cycle is rooted in the Dutch tradition of democratic visioning and strategic planning, which emphasises the integration of policy and design alongside a robust participatory ethos. This tradition is central to the planning education offered at TU Delft, where students and professionals are trained to approach urban planning with an integrative perspective that combines technical expertise with a deep commitment to democratic processes and sustainable outcomes.

At TU Delft, the educational approach involves not just the theoretical aspects of planning, but also practical, hands-on experiences that simulate real-world planning challenges. This method teaches students the importance of balancing design and policy development with an inclusive approach that engages a broad spectrum of stakeholders. It fosters skills in negotiation, consensus-building, and strategic thinking, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to implement plans that are both visionary and grounded in citizens' needs.

The TU Delft Strategic Planning Cycle, influenced by this educational and cultural background, therefore, not only addresses the technicalities of urban planning but also prioritises the values of inclusivity and sustainability. It represents a model that is adaptable and sensitive to the dynamics of different urban environments, reflecting the Dutch legacy of careful, participatory, and forward-thinking urban planning.

The TU Delft Strategic Planning Cycle systematically integrates principles of sustainability and inclusivity with practical urban planning activities and principles of polycentric governance. Its utility lies in its structured, step-by-step approach that ensures comprehensive stakeholder involvement—from initial needs assessment through to implementation and upscaling—facilitating more democratic and effective urban planning. This model responds to the growing need for cities to not only adapt to rapid urbanisation and environmental pressures but also to do so in a way that is equitable and considers the diverse needs of all citizens. By incorporating a broad range of participatory tools and methodologies, the TU Delft Strategic Planning Cycle enables cities to develop spatial planning strategies that are not only innovative and sustainable but also tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities of each urban context. This makes it an indispensable tool for urban planners and policymakers aiming to foster resilient, vibrant, and just urban environments.

Understanding and addressing local conditions is key to the success of any planning endeavour. Adapting the Strategic Planning Cycle to local planning cultures, capacities, and conditions is crucial for its effectiveness and relevance. Each urban area has its unique socio-economic dynamics, cultural values, and institutional frameworks, which can significantly influence the success of planning initiatives. Tailoring the cycle to local contexts ensures that the strategies developed are not only culturally sensitive but also practically feasible within the existing administrative and financial capabilities of the region. This adaptation helps to foster local ownership, enhances the implementation of the plans, and ensures sustainable outcomes by aligning the planning process with local realities and stakeholder expectations. Moreover, considering local conditions will lead to more robust and resilient planning that anticipates and mitigates potential challenges specific to the area, ultimately leading to more successful and sustainable urban development.

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATORY STRATEGIC PLANNING

Democratic participatory strategic planning is an approach to urban development that emphasises the active involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the decision-making process. This method seeks to democratise planning by ensuring that the voices of all community members, including often under-represented groups, are heard and considered in the formulation of policies, plans, and designs. The goal is to create more equitable, sustainable, and resilient urban environments through collective visioning, co-design, and co-planning.

INTEGRATION OF POLICY, PLANNING, DESIGN WITH COLLECTIVE VISIONING, CO-DESIGN, AND CO-PLANNING

Democratic participatory strategic planning integrates various elements of urban development

POLICY INTEGRATION

Involves developing policies that are responsive to the needs and aspirations identified through participatory processes. These policies provide the framework within which planning and design solutions are developed, ensuring they adhere to the principles of equity and inclusivity.

PLANNING

Engages stakeholders in the development of strategic plans that outline long-term goals and the means to achieve them. This stage uses tools like GIS for spatial analysis and modelling to support data-driven decision-making while incorporating public input to ensure the plans reflect the community's desires.

DESIGN

Incorporates public input into the physical layout and aesthetic aspects of urban development. This includes the design of public spaces, infrastructure, and other urban elements, ensuring that they are functional, accessible, and aesthetically pleasing for all users.

COLLECTIVE VISIONING

This process involves bringing together city officials, experts, and citizens to envision the future they want for their community. It is a creative and aspirational phase where participants discuss and agree on long-term goals for the city's development, based on shared values and collective priorities.

CO-DESIGN AND CO-PLANNING

These are collaborative processes where stakeholders work together to develop solutions and plans. Co-design involves all stakeholders in the design process, ensuring that the outcomes are not only technically sound but also culturally and socially relevant. Co-planning goes a step further by involving stakeholders in the actual planning process, contributing to decisions on how resources are allocated, what projects are prioritized, and how interventions are implemented.

PRACTICE & EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

This approach is anchored in the Dutch planning history and practice. In the Netherlands, democratic participatory strategic planning is evident in the emphasis on consensus-building in urban development projects. Dutch planning culture is known for its collaborative approach, involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the planning process. This includes not only government entities and professional planners but also citizens, businesses, and advocacy groups.

At TU Delft, this approach is taught and researched extensively, particularly in how spatial justice and sustainability transitions are managed. The university focuses on educating students about the importance of integrating technical, social, and policy aspects in planning. Courses and projects often involve real-world scenarios where students engage with communities and stakeholders to co-design and co-plan urban interventions. This educational focus is complemented by research initiatives that explore innovative participatory methods and tools for sustainable urban development.

TU Delft also emphasises the role of new technologies and methodologies in enhancing participatory processes. For example, digital tools for geographic information systems (GIS), virtual reality (VR), and various online platforms are integrated into the planning process to facilitate more effective and inclusive engagement.

Overall, democratic participatory strategic planning as practiced in the Netherlands and taught at TU Delft embodies a comprehensive approach that merges technical expertise with deep community engagement to create urban environments that are reflective of and responsive to the needs of all their inhabitants.

This approach gave rise to a planning model adopted by UP2030 as a generic planning cycle, to which actions and tools can be attached.

THE TU DELFT STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE

The TU Delft Planning Cycle is a structured framework designed to integrate tools, methodologies, and frameworks systematically into urban planning processes, with a strong focus on participatory methods to ensure that the needs and priorities of all stakeholders are considered. This cycle supports the evaluation of city-wide implementation and the transferability of strategies across different urban contexts. Here's a detailed look at each step of the cycle:

1. TO IDENTIFY NEEDS

This initial phase involves a participatory approach to identifying the specific needs and priorities of the community. By involving residents and other stakeholders early on, the process ensures that the resulting urban planning initiatives are closely aligned with the actual requirements and aspirations of the city's inhabitants.

2. TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

Following the identification of needs, this step involves detailed stakeholder mapping and analysis to understand the roles, influences, and interests of various groups and individuals. Effective engagement strategies are then employed to involve these stakeholders actively in the planning process, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered.

3. TO ENVISION TOGETHER

This crucial participatory step encourages all stakeholders to collectively envision possible and desirable futures for the urban environment. It's a creative process that fosters shared visions and builds consensus on long-term goals for the city, laying a foundation for strategic planning and development.

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Planning Cycle
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Generic planning activities where tools, methodologies and frameworks can be applied.

TO UPSCALE
To evaluate city-wide implementation and transferability
10

TO IDENTIFY NEEDS
The process of identifying needs & priorities is also participatory
01

TO EVALUATE
The feedback loop of evaluating and adapting the strategy
09

TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS
After stakeholder mapping and analysis, stakeholders are engaged into the planning process
02

TO IMPLEMENT & TEST PROTOTYPES
The process of prototyping and testing
08

TO ENVISION TOGETHER
The participatory process of envisioning possible & desirable futures
03

TO CODESIGN INTERVENTIONS
The process of participatory design
07

TO CO-DESIGN STRATEGIES
The process of co-designing a step by step strategy, including policy and interventions
04

TO CODESIGN POLICY
The process of participatory policy design
06

TO EVALUATE FEASIBILITY & IMPACT
The process of evaluating the financial, technical and capacity feasibility and the social, economic and environmental impacts of actions.
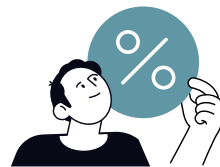**05**

4. TO CO-DESIGN STRATEGIES

Building on the shared vision, this phase involves stakeholders in the co-design of detailed, step-by-step strategies for achieving the envisioned future. This includes the development of specific policies and spatial interventions tailored to address the identified needs and priorities.

5. TO EVALUATE FEASIBILITY & IMPACT

Here, the feasibility of the proposed strategies is critically assessed, including financial, technical, and capacity considerations. Additionally, the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of these strategies are evaluated to ensure they are sustainable and beneficial in the long term.

6. TO CO-DESIGN POLICY
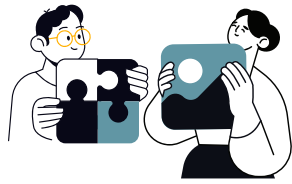
This involves the participatory design of policies that will enable the implementation of strategies. It's about creating policy frameworks that are not only effective but also equitable and inclusive, reflecting the collective input and consensus of all stakeholders.

7. TO CO-DESIGN INTERVENTIONS

Similar to policy design, this phase focuses on the participatory design of specific interventions or projects that will bring the strategies to life. This includes detailed planning of the actions needed to achieve the strategic objectives.

8. TO IMPLEMENT & TEST PROTOTYPES

Before full-scale implementation, strategies and interventions are prototyped and tested or simulated. This iterative process allows for real-world testing of concepts, enabling adjustments and improvements based on practical feedback and performance.

9. TO EVALUATE

Once prototypes have been tested, this stage involves a thorough evaluation to gather insights and feedback from all stakeholders. The evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions and provides a critical feedback loop for continuous improvement.

10. TO UPSCALE

The final step involves assessing the scalability of successful strategies and interventions. This includes evaluating their potential for city-wide implementation and their transferability to other urban areas, ensuring broader impact and applicability.

LIMITATIONS & CHALLENGES

While the Strategic Planning Cycle is a robust framework designed to enhance urban sustainability and inclusivity, it requites adaptation to local conditions. Different cities and communities have unique social, economic, and cultural dynamics that can influence the outcomes of planning initiatives. For instance, the level of stakeholder engagement and the effectiveness of participatory tools may vary greatly due to differences in local governance structures, cultural attitudes towards public participation, and available resources.

Moreover, the cycle's reliance on broad stakeholder involvement and advanced participatory methods may not be fully realisable in regions with limited civic infrastructure or where public trust in governmental processes is low. Additionally, the technological assumptions embedded in the cycle may exceed local capacities for implementation without significant investments in training and infrastructure.

THE 5-UP APPROACH

Running parallel to the UP2030 Planning Cycle is the 5UP approach, which encompasses UPDATE, UPSKILL, UPGRADE, UPSCALE, and UPTAKE. This approach focuses on continuously updating knowledge and skills, upgrading technologies and processes, scaling successful initiatives, and ensuring broad adoption and integration of innovative practices.

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PROCESSES

Participatory planning processes, as framed within the communicative turn in planning advocated by theorists like Patsy Healey, Judith Innes, and John Forester, emphasise the central role of dialogue, collaboration, and consensus-building in urban planning and development. This approach challenges traditional, top-down planning models by advocating for a more inclusive, democratic process where diverse stakeholders, including community members, experts, and policymakers, actively engage in shaping planning outcomes. Healey, Innes, and Forester, among others, argue that effective planning cannot be achieved solely through technical expertise or bureaucratic procedures. Instead, it requires the creation of communicative spaces where the values, needs, and knowledge of all participants are recognised and integrated into the planning process.

This shift towards communicative planning speaks to theories of polycentric governance advocated by Elinor Ostrom. It seeks to foster mutual understanding and agreement among stakeholders through continuous dialogue, negotiation, and reflection, making the planning process more transparent, adaptive, and responsive to the complexities of social life. By prioritising the voices and experiences of those often marginalised in planning processes, participatory planning within this communicative framework aims to achieve spatial justice and more equitable, sustainable urban environments. This approach aligns with the broader goals of social sustainability, as it not only seeks to address immediate urban challenges but also to empower communities and build social capital for long-term resilience and well-being.

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND POLYCENTRIC GOVERNANCE

Participatory planning intersects with notions of polycentric governance through its emphasis on inclusivity, diversity of voices, and the decentralisation of decision-making authority. Polycentric governance, a concept popularised by Elinor Ostrom, among others, refers to the organisation of governance across multiple centres of authority that operate independently yet interdependently. This model values the contributions of various stakeholders at different scales and jurisdictions, from local to global, recognising that multiple governing bodies can coexist and effectively manage common resources and address complex problems through collaboration and coordination.

INTERSECTION POINTS BETWEEN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND POLYCENTRIC GOVERNANCE

1. **Decentralisation and Empowerment:** Both participatory planning and polycentric governance advocate for decentralizing decision-making authority, empowering local communities and smaller units of governance to have a say in the processes that affect them. This decentralisation ensures that governance is more responsive to the specific needs and conditions of diverse communities.

2. **Diversity and Inclusivity:** Participatory planning's emphasis on including a wide range of stakeholders in the planning process mirrors polycentric

governance's recognition of the importance of multiple governing authorities. Both approaches value the diversity of perspectives and expertise that different stakeholders bring to the table, facilitating more comprehensive and inclusive solutions to urban and environmental challenges.

3. **Collaboration and Coordination:** In a polycentric governance system, different centres of decision-making need to coordinate and collaborate to address complex issues effectively. Participatory planning fosters a similar spirit of collaboration by bringing together various stakeholders, including government entities, community groups, and individuals, to co-create urban planning solutions.

4. **Adaptability and Learning:** Both approaches emphasise adaptability and learning from diverse experiences and experiments. Participatory planning allows for flexibility in addressing urban challenges, as it incorporates feedback and insights from community members and stakeholders. Similarly, polycentric governance encourages experimentation and learning from different governance practices across various centres, leading to more resilient and adaptable management strategies.

5. **Addressing Complexity:** The complex nature of urban and environmental challenges necessitates governance approaches that are not confined to rigid, hierarchical structures. Participatory planning and polycentric governance both offer frameworks for managing complexity through distributed authority, multi-level engagement, and the integration of various knowledge systems and values.

By intersecting participatory planning with polycentric governance, urban governance can harness the strengths of both approaches: the ground-up engagement and inclusivity of participatory planning, combined with the flexibility, diversity, and collaborative potential of polycentric governance systems. This intersection offers a robust framework for achieving more democratic, effective, and just urban governance that is capable of addressing the multifaceted challenges of contemporary urbanisation and sustainability.

THE CHALLENGES TO PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

While the communicative turn in planning, with its emphasis on participatory processes, is widely celebrated for its potential to democratise urban planning, it has also faced several critiques.

Critics argue that the ideal of participatory planning is often difficult to implement in practice due to institutional constraints, lack of resources, and existing power dynamics. The effort to include diverse voices can be hampered by bureaucratic inertia, limited public engagement budgets, and the complexity of facilitating truly inclusive dialogues.

Despite intentions of inclusivity, participatory processes can inadvertently reinforce existing inequalities. Critics point out that not all community members have equal capacity or opportunity to engage in participatory planning due to factors like time, knowledge, language barriers, and socioeconomic status. This can lead to the domination of the discourse by more articulate, resource-rich, or politically connected groups, marginalising the voices of those the process intends to empower.

Some critics question the effectiveness of participatory planning in leading to tangible changes or improvements in urban policies and spaces. They argue that without a clear mechanism to translate community input into action, participatory planning can become a tokenistic exercise that raises expectations but fails to deliver meaningful outcomes.

The emphasis on consensus within communicative

planning is critiqued for potentially glossing over deep-seated conflicts and power imbalances within communities. Critics argue that striving for consensus can silence dissenting voices or minority viewpoints, overlooking the reality that some urban planning issues involve irreconcilable conflicts that cannot be easily resolved through dialogue alone.

Some critics contend that the communicative turn may depoliticise planning by framing it as a neutral, technical process of dialogue and consensus rather than acknowledging the inherently political nature of urban development decisions and the ensuing conflicts. This can divert attention from the structural inequalities and power relations that shape urban spaces, potentially detracting from more radical approaches to spatial justice.

Moreover, participatory processes can be resource-intensive, requiring significant time, expertise, and financial investment to facilitate meaningful engagement. This can strain the capacities of planning departments, particularly in contexts with limited public sector resources, making it challenging to sustain participatory initiatives over the long term.

Despite these challenges, we continue to advocate for participatory planning as a critical avenue for achieving more democratic, equitable, and just urban environments. We recognise the need to address these challenges through ongoing innovation and reflexivity in planning practices.

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN AND CO-DESIGN

The ideas of participatory planning and polycentric governance significantly reflect and enrich the practices of participatory design and co-design, extending the spirit of collaboration, inclusivity, and distributed decision-making into the realm of urban and product design. Participatory design and co-design emerge as methodologies that not only embody these principles but also operationalise them in the creation of urban places.

Participatory design and co-design prioritise the active involvement of all stakeholders, not only end-users, in the design process. This collaborative approach mirrors the polycentric governance model by recognising the value of diverse perspectives and expertise. By involving participants from various backgrounds, including those often marginalised in decision-making processes, these design methodologies ensure that the outcomes are more responsive to the users' actual needs and aspirations.

Just as polycentric governance advocates for decentralising authority across multiple centres, participatory design and co-design decentralise the design process. They challenge the traditional designer-centric approach, where decisions are made by a few experts by distributing design authority among all participants. In this sense, design is also a kind of resource that can be distributed among stakeholders. This democratisation of design processes empowers community members, acknowledging them as co-creators with valuable insights and creative potential.

Participatory design and co-design are inherently adaptable and iterative, embracing the principle of learning through doing and feedback. This reflects the adaptability and experimental nature of polycentric governance and participatory planning, where

solutions are continuously refined based on collective input and real-world testing. Such an approach allows for the design process to be flexible and responsive to emerging needs and challenges, fostering innovation and creativity.

DESIGNING FOR DIVERSITY AND JUSTICE

Designing for diversity and spatial justice involves creating urban environments, services, and systems that reflect and accommodate the needs, values, and aspirations of all community members, particularly those historically marginalised or underserved. This approach necessitates a shift from conventional design practices towards more inclusive, participatory, and empathetic methodologies.

At its core, spatial quality plays a pivotal role in delivering spatial justice by ensuring that urban spaces not only meet the functional requirements of safety, accessibility, and utility but also enhance the well-being, dignity, and social interactions of those who inhabit them. High-quality urban design integrates considerations of sustainability, well-being, and cultural relevance, recognising that the physical and psychological impacts of the built environment significantly influence residents' quality of life. By prioritising spatial quality, urban design for spatial justice seeks to dismantle barriers that marginalise certain groups, ensuring that public spaces, infrastructure, and amenities support the collective flourishing of all community members. This approach acknowledges that just and equitable urban environments are achieved not only through the distribution of resources and services but also through the thoughtful design of spaces that foster social cohesion, environmental resilience, and a deep sense of belonging.

KEY ELEMENTS FOR PARTICIPATORY DESIGN AND INCLUSIVE PROCESSES

For meaningful participatory design processes, it is crucial to involve diverse community members in the design process from the outset, ensuring that planning and development decisions are informed by a broad spectrum of perspectives. Co-design workshops and other participatory tools facilitate the direct involvement of stakeholders in creating solutions, acknowledging and valuing their expertise and lived experiences.

RECOGNISE AND ADDRESS HISTORICAL INJUSTICES

- Understand the historical context of the area or community you are designing for, including past injustices and their impacts on space allocation and access.
- Design interventions should aim to rectify these injustices, whether through reparation efforts, re-imagining the use of space, or ensuring equitable access to resources.

Prioritise Accessibility and Usability for All
- Implement design principles to ensure that urban spaces and services are accessible to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- Consider physical accessibility, as well as sensory and cognitive inclusivity, in all design aspects.

FOSTER CONNECTION AND INTERACTION

- Create spaces that encourage interaction and connection among diverse groups, breaking down barriers and fostering a sense of community.
- Design public spaces that are welcoming and safe for all, and where people can gather to discuss and deliberate.

INTEGRATE CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND REPRESENTATION

- Respect and incorporate local cultures, traditions, and identities into the design of urban spaces and services.
- Use design to celebrate cultural diversity through public art, architecture, and community spaces that reflect the community's heritage and aspirations.
Plan for Economic and Environmental Justice

• Ensure that development does not disproportionately benefit certain groups over others or lead to the displacement of local residents and businesses.

• Incorporate green spaces and environmental sustainability measures that benefit all community members, particularly those in underserved areas.

USE DATA AND DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

• Employ data and mapping tools to identify and understand disparities and needs within communities.

• Be cautious of biases in data collection and analysis processes, ensuring they do not reinforce existing inequalities.

FOSTER CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE AND FEEDBACK

• Establish mechanisms for ongoing engagement and feedback from diverse community stakeholders, allowing for the adaptation and evolution of designs based on changing needs and insights.

• Recognise that designing for diversity and spatial justice is an iterative process that requires flexibility and openness to change.

By adopting these strategies, designers and planners can contribute to creating more just, equitable, and inclusive urban environments that not only meet the diverse needs of their inhabitants but also empower them as active participants in shaping their own communities.
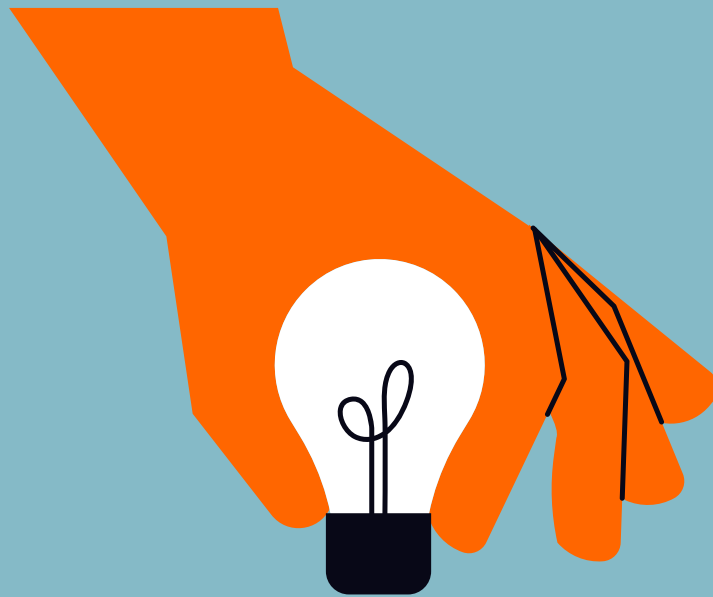
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