

INASP STRATEGY 2016-2020

Research and knowledge at
the heart of development



Vision and Mission

This strategy has been produced by the Board of Trustees and staff of INASP as a guide to focus our activities for the next five years and to stimulate others to join us in achieving our vision. It builds on the firm foundations laid since INASP was established in 1992, and reflects the rapidly changing global environment in which INASP works.

This strategy has been developed after a period of consultation with our staff and partners, and draws on the findings of the recently commissioned survey of global stakeholders in the research and knowledge sector. It also incorporates continual learning from our own practice and that of our partners.

This document, and a shortened version of it, can be found online at www.inasp.info/strategy.

Julie Brittain

Executive Director, INASP

August 2016

Our Vision

Research and knowledge at the heart of development

Our Mission

To support individuals and institutions to produce, share and use research and knowledge, which can transform lives.



Strategic Priorities

Research and knowledge at the heart of development

In line with our vision and mission, INASP is committed to strengthening the production, sharing and use of research and knowledge in developing and transitional countries to ensure that research and knowledge can be used to inform and influence national and international development.

Currently we work in more than 25 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. During this strategic period we will work in a more focused and integrated way in fewer countries, thereby ensuring that we add significant value to the development of a particular country's research and knowledge system. We are currently exploring how best to work in countries with the greatest need, including in fragile and post-conflict states.

We will continue to work in collaboration with existing and new local partners including higher education institutions, research institutes, government bodies and parliaments. We will also increase our engagement with civil society, media and public bodies who both produce and use research and knowledge. Fundamental for engaging in a partnership is the "readiness" that partner organizations demonstrate. Our definition of readiness comprises:

- Having a willingness and capacity to take on the work
- Having a clear idea of how the work will contribute to their own strategic plans and goals
- Proposing work that they have initiated themselves and that can be built upon.

Drawing on our core pillars of activities - capacity development, convening, influencing and working in partnership - and recognizing that technical skills alone are not sufficient, we will address four dimensions of change in our work. These dimensions cover change at the:

- Individual level (change in attitudes, skills, knowledge and behaviour)
- Institutional level (process and systems)
- Inter-personal level (the nature and strength of relationships, shared visions and understandings)
- Environmental level (the broader research and policy environment).

We will explore INASP's professional-services offer, including new advisory-support services and a separate evaluation stream of work. We will seek to diversify our funding and to improve our profile, and actively plan to work with new institutions and partners in both the North and South.

Research and knowledge at the heart of development

We will focus our efforts over the next five years on the following three areas of work:

Producing research and knowledge

This area of work will support individuals and institutions to improve the quality of research and to ensure that research responds to national development challenges.

What we'll do:

- Strengthen the skills and knowledge of academic researchers to produce research to respond to national needs.
- Support researchers and professionals outside of academia, in research institutes, NGOs and civil society, in recognition that such organizations increasingly produce the research and knowledge needed for national development.
- Strengthen access to research information, working with international publishers, and building skills to effectively navigate and critically appraise digital sources.
- Support the development of robust IT systems in research and academic institutions to ensure that information can be accessed, and researchers can engage with peers across the world.
- Provide specialist and tailor-made support for women researchers to ensure that they can be as productive and successful as their male counterparts.
- Support universities and research institutions to adapt their processes, policies and behaviours to enhance the production of research and knowledge.

Sharing and communicating research and knowledge

This area of work will support producers of research and knowledge to better share and communicate research to both academic and non-academic audiences, including policymakers and practitioners.

What we'll do:

- Strengthen the skills and knowledge of developing-country researchers to share and communicate their research, using the AuthorAID platform, and embedding of research-writing courses in universities and research institutes.
- Support research communication to non-academic audiences, such as policymakers and practitioners.
- Strengthen the visibility and quality of Southern published research through the Journals Online platforms.
- Connect the users and producers of research to encourage greater alignment and increase the relevance of research evidence.
- Support universities and research institutions to adapt their processes, policies and behaviours to enhance the sharing and communication of research.

Using research and knowledge for national development

This area of work will support the individuals and institutions responsible for using research to inform development policy and practice.

What we'll do:

- Strengthen the critical thinking skills of students, recognizing the important role of young people, and enabling them to contribute meaningfully to national development.
- Train decision makers and support staff of government departments, parliaments and other public bodies to access, appraise and use research and evidence systematically.
- Support government departments, parliaments and other public bodies to adapt their institutional processes, policies and behaviours regarding the use of research and evidence.
- Promote dialogue between national decision makers and their citizens to ensure effective production, dissemination and use of evidence.

Context

The context in which we work is one of change and uncertainty. But there is a degree of consensus as to the global trends and challenges that the world faces. These include the impact of climate change and resource insecurity, changing geopolitical dynamics, demographic shifts, issues around mobility and migration, and the implications of growing economic inequalities. These are, to an extent, mitigated by the opportunities provided by increased social activism, access to new technologies and digital communication.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seek to address these trends and challenges. They are based on a vision of a collective, collaborative and inclusive journey towards sustainability and resilience, in which no one will be left behind. The SDGs emphasize the importance of working in partnerships. They also highlight the importance of research and knowledge as a crucial part of the development process. They identify access to life-long learning as a priority goal that enables individuals and communities to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society.¹

We believe that the use of research in development policy and practice can help to save lives, reduce poverty and improve quality of life. With the linking of national development agendas to broader international goals such as the SDGs, it is even more important for policymakers and practitioners to make better use of research evidence to inform decisions and to track progress.

The last 15 years have seen a revitalization of interest in science, technology, research and higher education in many developing countries. With increases in domestic and international investment, governments increasingly value local research expertise to inform national development, and this has contributed to a rapid growth in the university sector. In parallel, there has also been an expansion of institutions, such as think tanks and civil-society organizations, which are both producing and using research to inform development priorities and practice. All the evidence suggests that more and better quality research is being produced in developing countries, and, with the help of the Internet and initiatives such as INASP's Journals Online project, this research is becoming more internationally visible.

‘Female researchers are often disadvantaged due to limited prior educational opportunities, family expectations and institutional biases towards the careers of men’

1. Although quality research and knowledge underpin the success of all of the SDGs, the specific relevant SDG targets reflecting our work are: enabling all learners to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development (SDG 4.7); enhancing scientific research and encouraging innovation (SDG 9.5); and enhancing North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms (SDG 17.6)

However, significant challenges still remain – particularly how to create a pro-research culture and an enabling environment in local institutions, and how to overcome infrastructure problems. Young people make up over 25% of the population in developing countries, but poor-quality higher education is limiting their potential to contribute to development. Researchers struggle with poor equipment and facilities, and the skill gaps in writing, analytical and critical thinking skills persist. Female researchers in particular are often disadvantaged due to limited prior educational opportunities, family expectations, institutional biases towards the careers of men, a lack of senior female role models and minimal efforts to adapt to or address the needs of women. Research agendas and development priorities are commonly still driven by Northern interests as that is often where the funds for implementing agendas and policies lie. Local journals can play a key role in disseminating locally produced research but editors often need support to implement the publishing processes and standards that will give their publication credibility locally and internationally. And, while policymakers appreciate that national policies need to draw on locally relevant research, the awareness of and ability to find, evaluate and systematically use

locally-sourced research for evidence-informed policy making can be improved, and connections between those who can use research and knowledge and those who produce it are often weak.

INASP has extensive experience of overcoming such challenges and barriers. We have an established track record that puts research and knowledge at the heart of development. But we also work in an increasingly competitive and uncertain environment. Traditional development models are being questioned and there are debates about the future of aid, new development practices and the role of established development institutions. Core funding is no longer guaranteed and donor priorities are changing. Aid strategies and thematic priorities reflect new agendas and an increasing proportion of aid budgets will be spent on humanitarian crises and fragile and conflict affected states.

Development organizations like INASP need to adapt to the demands of this changing environment and be responsive to the needs of stakeholders and partners. We need to build on our strengths and experience to help ensure that research knowledge continues to be at the heart of the development process, and help transform attitudes to the value of research.

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INASP's Core Pillars

Our approach is based on four inter-linked pillars of activities: capacity development, convening, influencing and working in partnership. These four pillars are core to our offer and are central to our identity as a catalyst for change.

Capacity Development

We develop local capacity to support the production, sharing and use of research and knowledge in developing countries. We have a strong focus on learning and disseminating what works, promoting South-to-South learning, mentoring and institutional pairing, as well as online learning and using blended approaches to training. Our core expertise is in providing skills development for key actors in the research and knowledge system: researchers, ICT staff, journal editors, librarians, parliamentarians and government policymakers. Sustainability is core to all that we do, and we are working to ensure greater inclusiveness, so that both men and women have equal opportunities to benefit.

Convening

We promote collaboration and co-creation by bringing together different partners involved in the production and use of knowledge for national development. We have a strong track record of promoting collaborative working and developing communities of practice. We are continually improving our capabilities and methodologies, in order to develop more appropriate and responsive approaches that reflect the context in which our partners work.

Influencing

Increasingly we realize that capacity development needs to be complemented by influencing those who have the power to make change happen, both locally and internationally. We therefore encourage policymakers and practitioners to take a positive attitude towards the use of knowledge and relevant research to inform their work. We also advocate for investment in developing-country research capacity, critical to ensure that research is relevant to and grounded in local contexts. Together with our partners, we have the potential and credibility to lead debates in research development and to put forward thinking on a range of issues ranging from the role of women in the research and knowledge system to concerns about the cultural and political implications of the lack of investment in local research.

Partnership

Working in partnership is fundamental to INASP's approach and underlies our capacity development, convening and influencing work. We believe in investing in long-term relationships to build trust and promote ownership amongst local partners through an inclusive, participatory approach. We also believe that offering more comprehensive support to our local partners by working with public and private-sector organizations brings complementary skills and experience.

Our Values

*We are a values-driven organization.
The values that govern the way we work are:*

Respect

We respect each other, our partners, beneficiaries and supporters, and recognize the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity; as such we will respect the reputation of INASP and treat others with respect and courtesy.

Integrity

We aspire to work to the highest standards of personal honesty and behaviour, and we will not compromise our reputation and will not place ourselves under any obligation, financial or otherwise to a person or organization that may influence our decisions or actions.

Openness and Transparency

We are fair and open, and accountable for decisions and actions.

Commitment

We go the extra mile to ensure the work that we do contributes to long-term sustainable development.

Participation

We are committed to working with others, and work in partnership with individuals, institutions and networks to achieve shared goals.

Valuing our Staff

We are committed to staff wellbeing, creating a positive working environment and investing in staff development.

The INASP Approach

At INASP, we believe that research and knowledge have a crucial role to play in addressing global challenges and contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. To realize this potential, we work in partnership to strengthen the capacity of individuals and institutions to produce, share and use research and knowledge, in support of national development.

Our understanding

Our approach is based on an understanding that:

- Locally generated knowledge and solutions are key to solving local development challenges.
- Research quality is critical to ensuring that evidence is appropriate, relevant, and credible.
- Evidence and knowledge are central to designing and delivering socially just and effective policies.
- Everyone has an equal right to access the world's collective knowledge, irrespective of geography, wealth, race, ethnicity or gender.
- Researchers from all types of institutions (academia, civil society and government) have an equal right to contribute their knowledge and evidence and to participate in the global problem-solving process in aid of development.
- Working in an integrated and systemic way is more effective in realizing longer-term development.
- Our work must be grounded in a good understanding of the social and political contexts and the power dynamics within which we and our partners work.

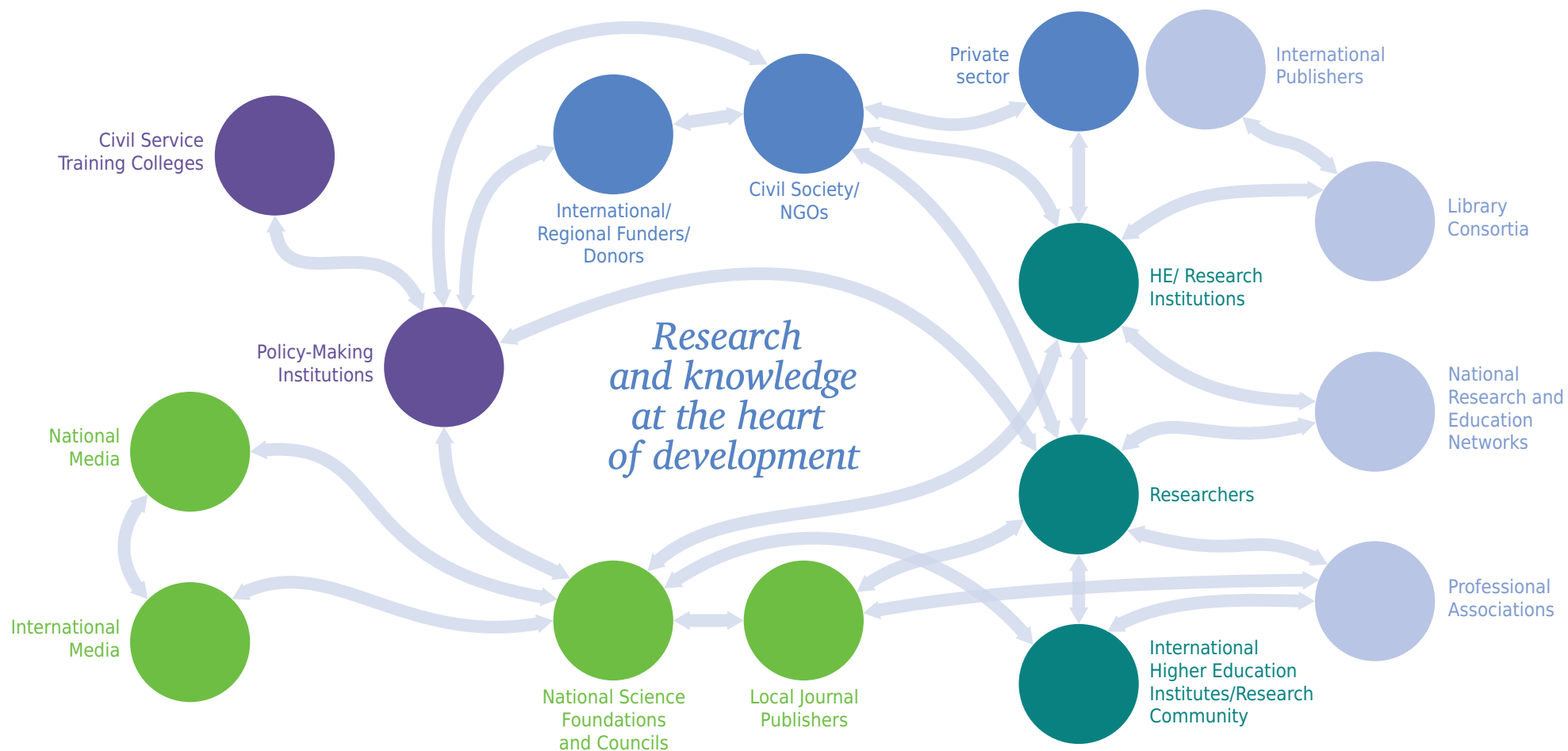
Principles

The key principles that underpin our approach and guide our strategy are:

- **Relevant and Responsive:** Always adapting our work to local contexts and the changing needs of our partners.
- **Promoting Equity:** Actively addressing the needs of both men and women across all of our work and addressing issues of power within the research and knowledge system.
- **Working across the System:** Using our unique network of individuals and institutions across research and knowledge systems in multiple countries to promote collective knowledge sharing, problem solving and better collaboration.
- **Ensuring Sustainability:** Agreeing clear plans for sustainability, which are appropriate to our partners.
- **Practising Good Governance:** Delivering on our commitments to key stakeholders, acting responsibly and ensuring transparency.
- **Offering Value for Money:** Using the principles of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity in our programme design and delivery.
- **Critical Thinking, Reflection and Learning:** Continuously improving our strategies and approaches through ongoing organizational learning.
- **Expertise:** Making the fullest use of the experience, insights and skill of our staff to deliver excellent programmes.

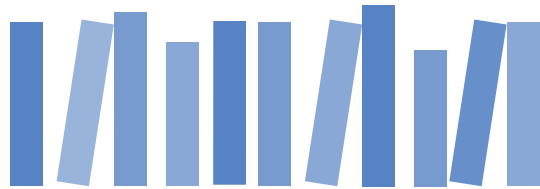


Working across research and knowledge systems



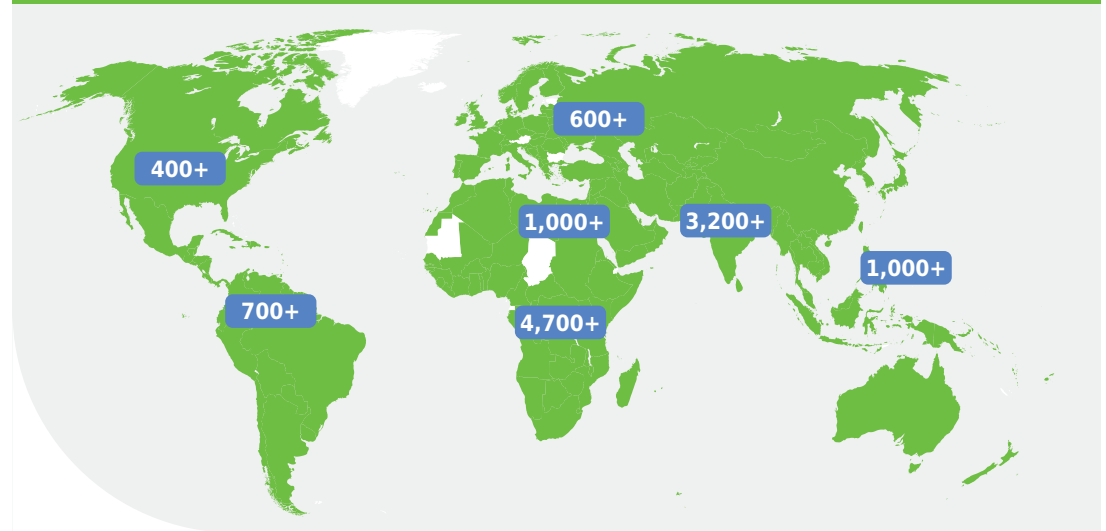
\$92 million

saved annually



by universities and research institutions for access to international research journals and books

AuthorAID global research network
12,000+ researchers



20 million

downloads



from national journal platforms

Supporting 30+ ministries and parliaments in



Countries



4 million

students and researchers in over

1,600 universities

able to access

50,000 e-journals
and 20,000 e-books

Track Record: What we have achieved

INASP has 25 years of experience of working in partnership to support research production, sharing and use. We have a well-established network of international contacts and a global reputation. Our current projects span more than 25 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. A recent stakeholder survey credited INASP with making a significant contribution to the communication and accessibility of research. Interviewees valued INASP's partnership approach and the way our work is grounded in local partnerships and is supported through strong relations with a range of stakeholders. At INASP we are in a unique position as an organization that works with a broad range of actors across the research and knowledge system. In addition to our recognized role as a needs-led capacity developer, survey respondents suggested that we develop and expand our roles of convener across the research and knowledge system and advocate for the importance of research and evidence in the development process.

Some key achievements from the past 10 years include:

- Enabling more than four million students and researchers in over 1,600 universities and research institutes in 20+ countries to access more than 50,000 online journals and 20,000 online books. In 2015 we estimate that we saved these institutions more than US\$92 million.
- Supporting library consortia in more than 15 countries to develop their negotiation skills so that they can work directly with publishers and continue to provide sustainable access to online journals and books.
- Training over 1,800 librarians to manage digital libraries and support researchers and students to find the information they need.
- Enabling national research and education networks (NRENs) in Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia to train over 200 IT engineers and improve the reliability and performance of university IT networks, ensuring that researchers and students can access digital information and communicate with peers across the world.
- Establishing and developing AuthorAID – an international research community hosted by INASP. AuthorAID is a virtual platform that helps researchers in developing countries to publish and otherwise communicate their work. It also serves as a wider global forum to discuss and disseminate research. It links new researchers with experienced academic mentors, organizes online courses, facilitates access to a library of free research and training resources, and works to overcome the barriers faced by developing-country researchers to publish in refereed journals. AuthorAID is a pioneering programme that provides a community space and global network for researchers who all too often work in isolation. By March 2016 there were more than 12,000 members of the AuthorAID community from more than 170 countries.
- Developing a suite of online courses using in-house and international expertise which are designed for low-bandwidth environments and which employ a unique approach utilizing local facilitators from across the globe. Our online courses in research-writing skills are designed to reach as many as 1,000 early-career researchers from more than 40 countries in one course, enabling online networking and peer learning across country and regional borders. This technology has given us the ability to reach researchers in fragile countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia and South Sudan and has the added advantage of being a flexible learning environment that can be accessed from work or home, something particularly appreciated by female researchers.

- Setting up Journals Online (JOLs) platforms to host local journals in order to increase the visibility, accessibility and use of local research. The biggest of these platforms, African Journals Online, hosts more than 500 African journals and is now managed from South Africa. We are in the process of transferring the management of similar platforms to national organizations in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Latin America. There have been more than 20 million downloads of journal articles from the JOLs since they were founded.
- Co-developing, with African Journals Online (AJOL), a set of Journal Publishing Practices & Standards (JPPS), accompanied by a journal-quality course. All of the journals on the JOL platforms will be assessed according to international criteria for an 'excellent' journal, with the intention of improving the quality of local journals.
- Supporting the use of evidence in policy making in more than 30 ministries and parliaments in 11 countries so that they can make more informed decisions. This includes the development of evidence-informed policy making curricula for civil service training centres.
- Supporting a series of innovative approaches that encourage the use of evidence in policy making. Successful examples include the incorporation of scientific information in a Climate Change Bill in Kenya, and an online course to promote the use of evidence in Latin America, which is now being rolled out in Africa.
- Supporting institutions to analyse and address gender issues in their context. This includes support to the University of Dodoma in Tanzania to develop a gender and sexual harassment policy and to the Gender Centre for Research and Training in Sudan to provide training to policymakers on how to incorporate gender considerations into government policy.





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