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# Multi-stakeholder transformative governance including tenure within the ‘Participatory Informed Landscape Approach’ (PILA) to catalyze action in production landscapes

Sustainable landscapes in action:  
governance, tenure and land rights within integrated landscape management,  
World Bank Land Conference 2025, 9 May 2025

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# Key messages



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**Improving Governance of Tenure in Policy and Practice: Agrarian and Environmental Transition in the Mekong Region and Its Impacts on Sustainability Analyzed through the ‘Tenure-Scape’ Approach**

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**Abstract:** Land relations in the Mekong Region are marked by the densely populated and intensively cultivated lowlands and the more extensive settlement and cultivation areas in the uplands. Land-use changes in the lowlands and uplands are interlinked and are a key process of agrarian and environmental transition. The ‘tenure-scape’ approach is introduced as a qualitative analysis combining integrated landscape approaches, governance and rights-based approaches, while underlining the continuity of legitimate tenure rights, limitations and obligations. This approach is used to analyze the impact of the Green Revolution and the global commodity boom, in particular the growth of rubber and coffee, on sustainability in the Mekong countries, i.e., Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam. The way forward points to the use of the elements of the ‘tenure-scape’ approach to re-evaluate the potential contribution of smallholder farmers to the wider physical and social landscapes. The ultimate goal is to go from transition to transformation toward a more secure, equitable and control over land, for livelihoods of the context.

**Keywords:** agrarian transition; investment; smallholder

## 1. Introduction

Land relations in lowlands and uplands, coastal areas, and more inland. Decisions over how long, and under what conditions for people’s in 50 percent of the population most of the agricultural labor force. This rural landscape, however, is the diverse livelihoods which crucially connect the concerns of rural social and environmental people and ecosystems which people use land. Wider socioeconomic local communities [1].



Check for updates  
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Article  
**Customised Methodology to Assess and Measure Effectiveness of Integrated Landscape Management Relevant Multi-Stakeholder Transformative Governance, Incorporating Rights-Based Planning and Tenure Aspects, Applied in Kenya, Nigeria, and Viet Nam**

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**Abstract:** Different thinking and strategies are needed to transform our food systems at different scales. Food systems can be changed towards a more sustainable path through multi-stakeholder transformative governance at the landscape level because that is where national-level visions, objectives, and policies meet with local practice, priorities, and actions. Concrete and practical guidance on how to effectively put a multi-stakeholder transformative governance process into practice is missing. Through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded ‘Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Programme’, led by the World Bank, countries are supported in integrated landscape management (ILM) to ensure that production systems are embedded within wider landscapes to safeguard the natural capital and ecosystem services on which they depend. A customised methodology to assess and measure the effectiveness of ILM-relevant multi-stakeholder transformative governance, incorporating rights-based planning and tenure aspects, has been developed that makes governance explicit in the ILM process. This methodology aims to improve landscape-level institutional coordination, coherence, and collaboration through enhanced horizontal and vertical coordination and network dynamics. The conceptual framework of the customised methodology and how to operationalise it are explained and illustrated with the application in the country projects in Kenya, Nigeria, and Viet Nam. Making transformative governance explicit within the ILM process at the landscape level will require investments in time and capabilities, but allows governance to act as a catalyst towards more sustainable pathways.

**Keywords:** transformative governance; multi-stakeholder partnerships; integrated landscape management; rights-based approaches; tenure rights; food systems; production landscapes

## 1. Introduction

The High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has called for “a radical transformation in our food systems at different scales” [1] (p. 90). The current sustainability strategies have failed to curb negative impacts. Therefore, different thinking and strategies are needed. There is sufficient scientific knowledge and evidence clearly demonstrating that we cannot afford to not act, especially when the costs of not acting are higher than any cost incurred in the short term [1]. Integrative actions, such as integrated landscape management, are required at different scales [2]. The focus on production landscapes highlights that production—often focusing on high yields, production volumes, and gross margins, rather than nutritional value or sustainability aspects—is not taking place in isolation, but as part of a wider landscape [3].

By putting people at the core and doing the proper things in the proper places and at the proper scale, food systems can be changed towards a more sustainable path through



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A stocktaking exercise of more than 150 publications conducted in 2022-2023 related to governance, tenure, rights-based approaches, landscape approaches, and integrated landscape management (ILM):

- **Landscape-level governance** is required because the landscape level is where national-level visions, objectives, and policies meet with local practice, priorities, and actions.
- **Rights-based approaches** address secure and equitable access to land explicitly.
- **Legitimate tenure rights** are central to governance and to achieving effective and equitable integrated landscape management.

The ‘**tenure-scape**’ approach to underline the importance of understanding connections, synergies and trade-offs between landscapes, governance and legitimate tenure rights.



Applying the ‘tenure-scape’ approach in the Mekong

**Provide concrete and practical guidance** on how to effectively put this into practice as this is missing.



Applying the MSTG approach in





- Central environmental and development challenge is the **conversion of forest ecosystems and other natural vegetation into agriculture** – a direction driven by increasing populations, unsustainable production systems, weak environmental protection and enforcement in natural habitats, and little diversification of livelihoods. Exemplified in the production landscapes of:
  - Kenya, in the coffee in the Mount Elgon Ecosystem.
  - Nigeria, in cocoa and palm oil in Cross River and Ondo States.
  - Viet Nam, in rice in the Lower Mekong Delta.
- **Integrated landscape management (ILM)** for multiple benefits (e.g., higher yields while conserving biodiversity and ecosystem services) is crucial to move from business-as-usual to transformative change for deforestation-free commodity/crop value chains and sustainable agri-food systems.
- **Multi-stakeholder transformative governance including tenure**, is key to ILM to identify and reconcile competing and numerous interests and values of various stakeholders.





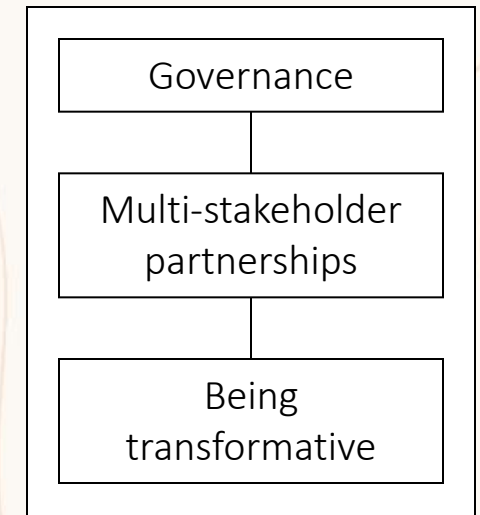
# Multi-stakeholder transformative governance

What is **multi-stakeholder transformative governance**?

**Governance** is dealing with rules, institutions, organisations, and processes through which stakeholders articulate their interests, frame and prioritise issues, and make, implement, monitor, and enforce decisions concerning *transformative food systems*.

**Multi-stakeholder partnerships**: occur when multiple actors work genuinely together through collective action to tackle complex challenges (transformative food systems) in an innovative and multifaceted manner that results in systemic change/transformation of, in this case, the existing governance.

**Being transformative**: meaning that one is able of reacting to, coping with, and even activating welcome changes in coupled social–ecological systems towards sustainability.

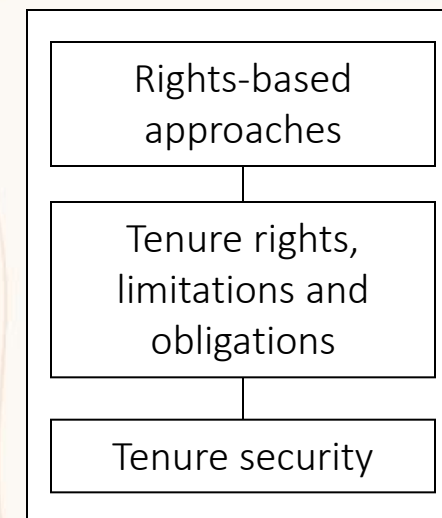


When people in the production landscapes in Kenya, Nigeria and Viet Nam rely on activities related to land, fisheries, forests, and water resources for their livelihoods **tenure rights, limitations and obligations** are important. **Rights-based approaches** address secure and equitable access to land explicitly.

**Tenure rights, limitations and obligations** are central to **governance**, and also a principal requirement to achieving effective and equitable **ILM**.

The link between **tenure rights** and **transformative governance** is that the interventions of the latter depend on tenure rights, which determine the actions that stakeholders in the production landscapes are permitted to take.

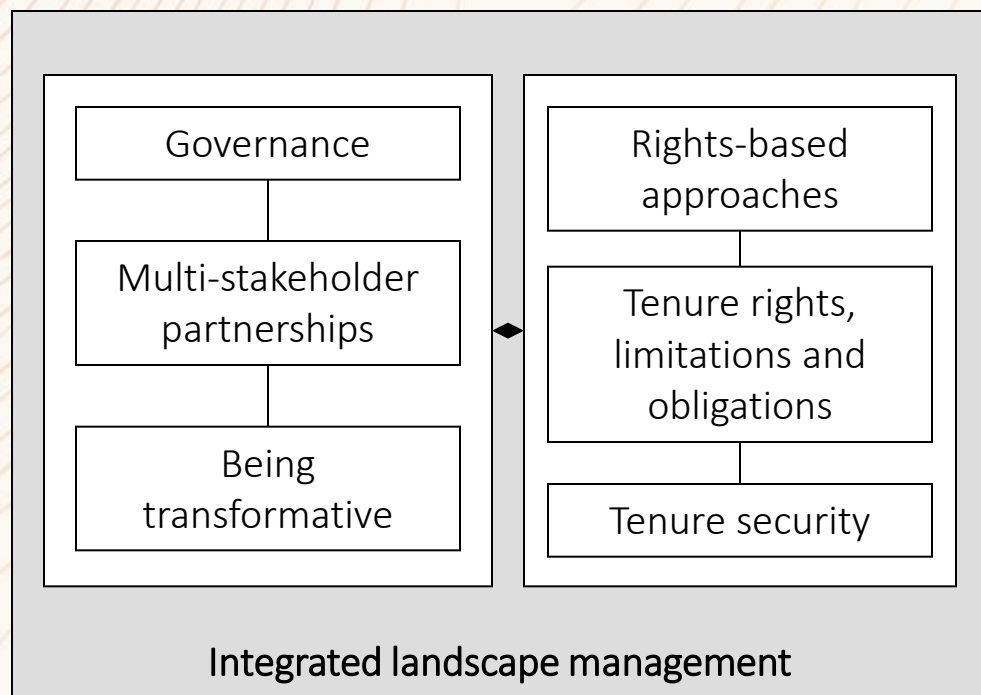
People having **secure tenure rights** are inclined to participate in decision-making processes related to natural resources management and use -> **ILM**.





# Conceptual framework within ILM

## Multi-stakeholder transformative governance conceptual framework



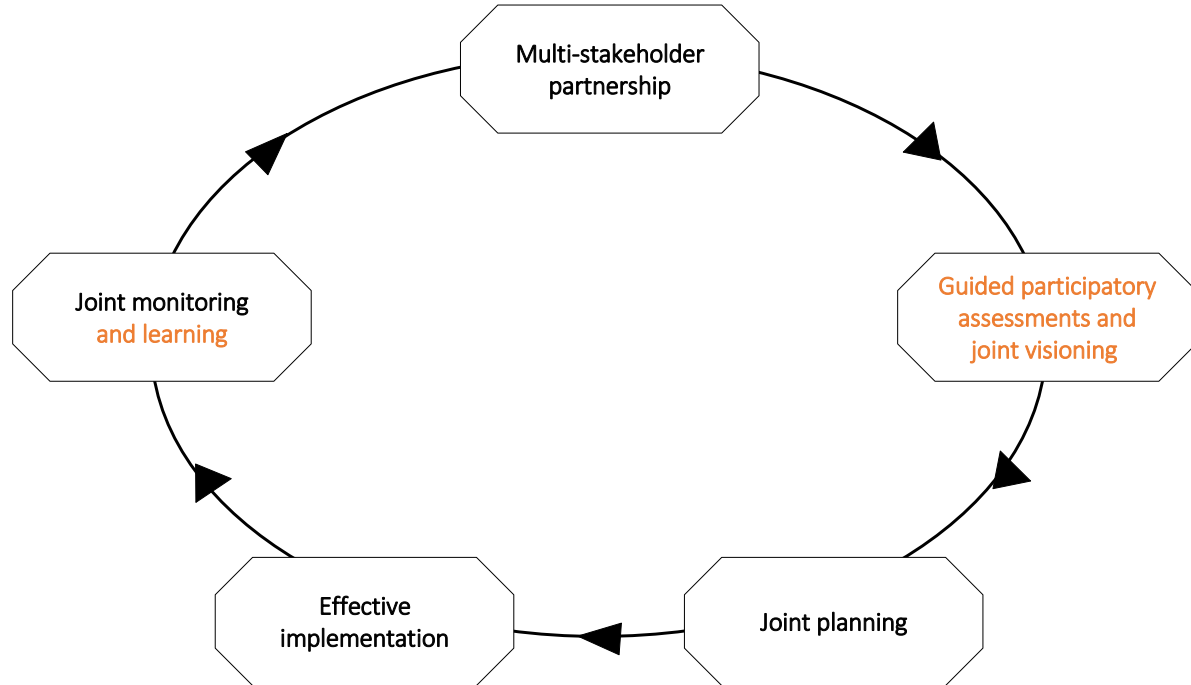
The **‘tenure-scape’ approach** is combining and integrating the multi-stakeholder transformative governance approach into Integrated Landscape Management (ILM), including rights-based approaches, while underlining that legitimate tenure rights, limitations and obligations as well as tenure security are essential.



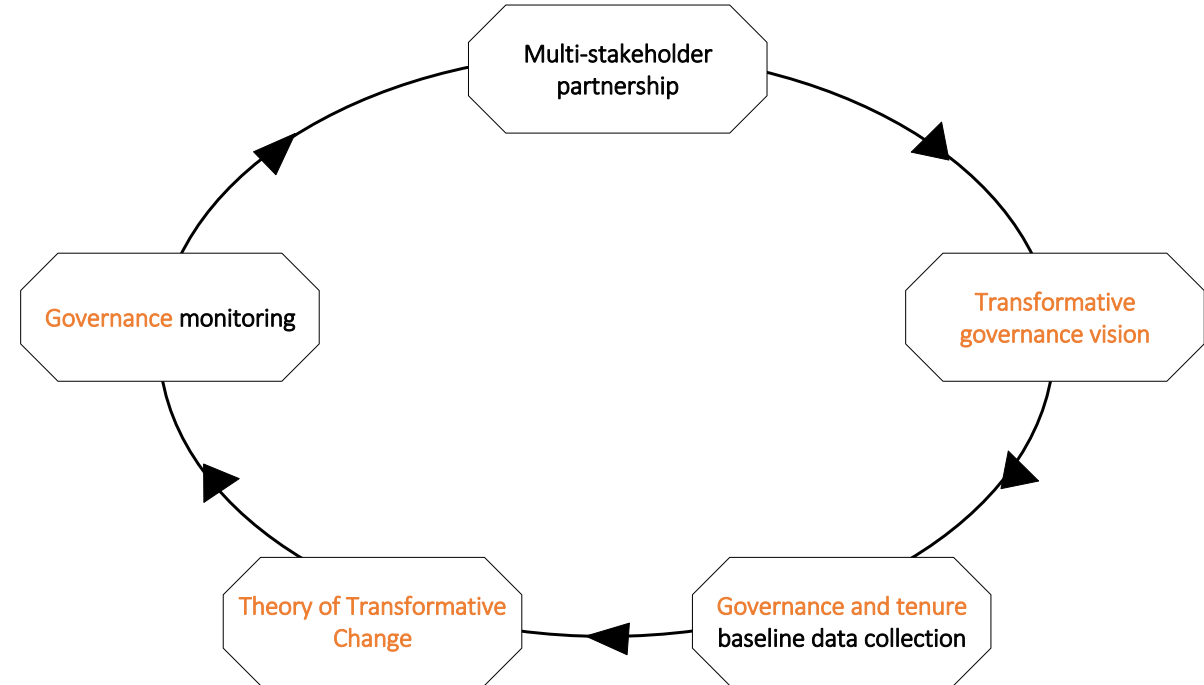
Component 1 on ILM

# Operational framework: applying MSTG to PILA

Applying PILA to integrated landscape management  
(FAO 2025)



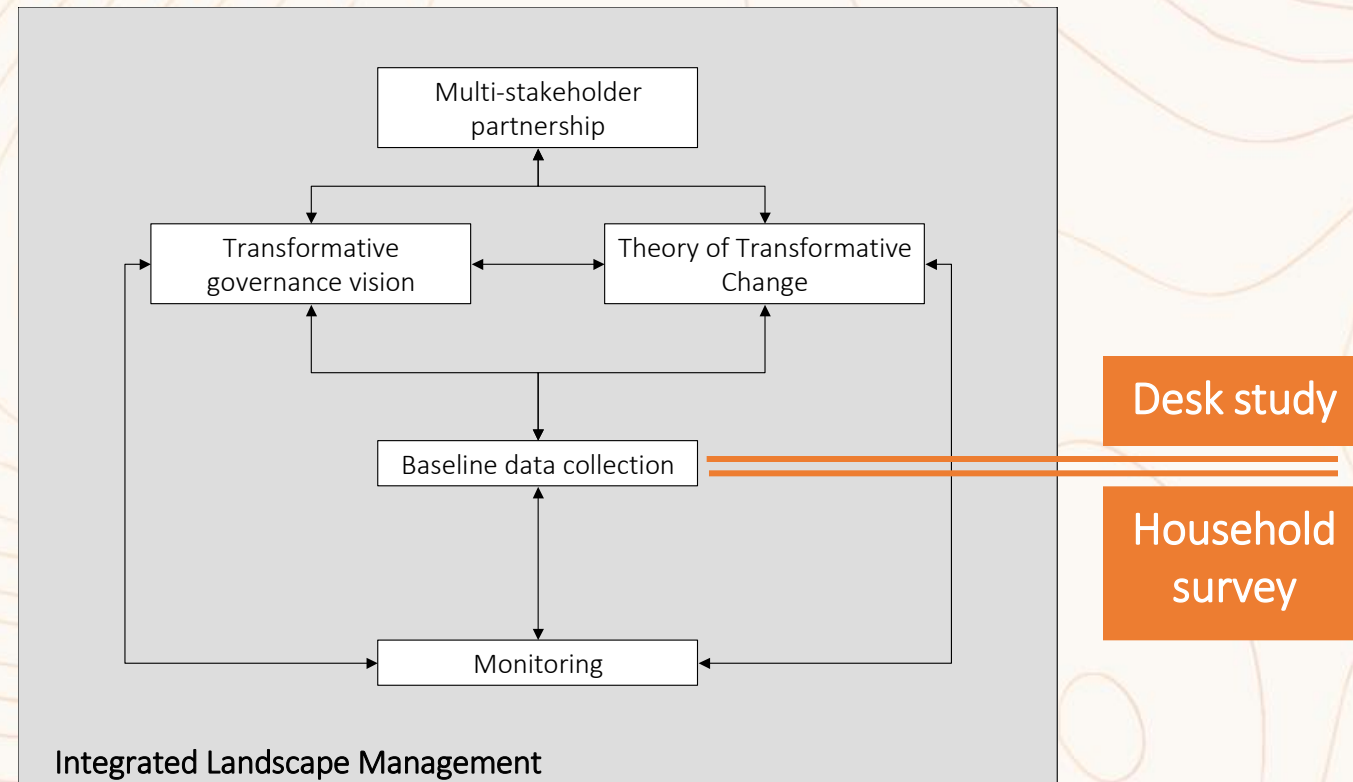
Making multi-stakeholder transformative governance  
and tenure operational in ILM





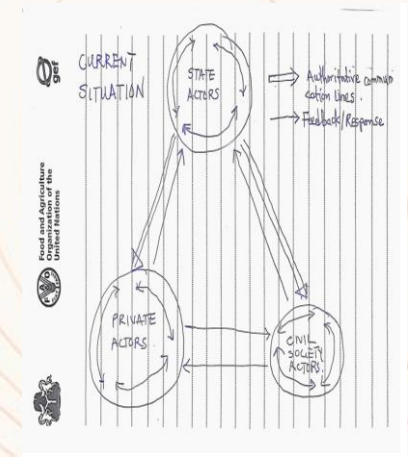
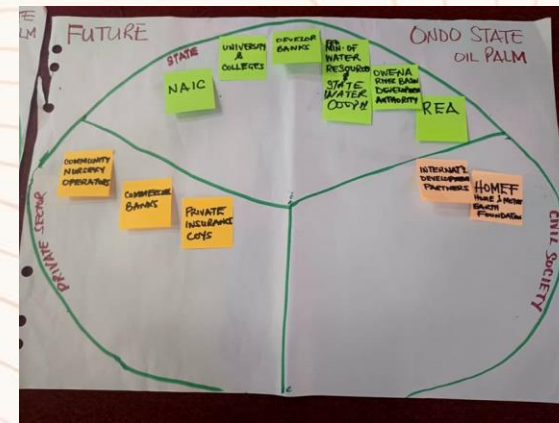
# Operational framework: interlinked MSTG components

The five components of the **multi-stakeholder transformative governance including tenure** approach to ILM are interlinked as shown in this graph.





- 





# Initial findings on governance and tenure

## In **Kenya, in the Mount Elgon Ecosystem (coffee)**:

- The governance of natural resources management is fragmented and its coordination needs strengthening.
- Land tenure issues related to incomplete inventory of land, unregistered land subdivision (private and community lands).

## In **Nigeria, in Ondo and Cross River States (cocoa and palm oil)**:

- Traditional authorities influence access to customary rights of occupancy (e.g., women and youth).
- 95% of agricultural land is untitled limiting investment in long-term sustainable practices in the agri-food systems.

## In **Viet Nam, in the Lower Mekong Delta (rice)**:


- Coordination and integration between environment and agriculture institutions needs strengthening to address more effectively their interrelations and interdependencies.
- “Red Books”, i.e. land-use rights certificates for agricultural land, and “Green Books” in protected forests with limited land rights (e.g., purpose cannot be changed, proportion of land under forest cover maintained).

# The way forward

- If we want to **transform and enhance the sustainability of production landscapes**, such as those in Kenya, Nigeria and Viet Nam, we need the combination of applying PILA to ILM with more explicit emphasis on multi-stakeholder transformative governance and tenure combines the capacity for adaptability and comprehensiveness with innovation.
- The ILM-relevant multi-stakeholder transformative governance approach provides a way forward to maximise synergies and minimise production trade-offs across land uses and land users in these landscapes across social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability to **a healthier planet and people**.
- While supporting more integrated, cross-sectoral work in the production landscapes within countries, the FOLUR Impact Program opens the door for more integrated, cross-divisional work within development agencies -> the ongoing work is **breaking 'silos' internally and externally**.
- The **results and lessons** from the three countries will be beneficial to the other 24 FOLUR country projects, and future GEF Programs such as the Food Systems Impact Program with 32 countries.



# Key take-aways



The 'tenure-scape' approach underlines the interlinkages between landscapes, governance and legitimate tenure rights.

The multi-stakeholder transformative governance (MSTG) approach provides concrete conceptual and practical guidance on how to effectively put it into practice.

MSTG acts as an enabler and catalyst for ILM, breaking 'silos' with enhanced coordination and cohesion between multiple governance levels and tenure.

FAO, 2025. Guidelines for applying the Participatory Informed Landscape Approach (PILA) to integrated landscape management for transformative food systems. *To be published later this year.*







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# Thank you for your attention!

More information is available on

GEF-7 FOLUR:  
<https://www.folur.org/>

FAO work within the GEF-7 FOLUR Impact Program including PILA:

<https://www.fao.org/forestry/our-focus/forests-environment/folur-programme/en>

GEF-8 Food Systems Impact Programme:

<https://www.fao.org/gef/GEF8/FSIP/en>

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