

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2007-2013 IN ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

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Abstract: *In this article will be carried out an analysis of the manner in which the three Baltic countries were able to implement rural development Policy at EU level. For rural development policy at EU level through EAFDR was allocated a budget of 96,3 billion € for the period 2007-2013. The total amount of funds for the three countries compared in this article is 3,54 billion €. The article begins with a comparative study on some characteristics of the national economy and the agricultural sector, such as population, GDP, GDP per capita, the total area, the area used for agriculture, the number of farms, number of persons engaged in agriculture, the importance of agriculture to the economies of those countries, will continue with the presentation of the amount of funds allocated for each axis and measure in the rural development programmes for the period 2007-2013 and another chapter will refer to the degree of access of funds from the EAFRD and shall end with a number of conclusions concerning the capacity of States to access EU funds. The three countries have experience in implementing EU funds considering that benefited from rural Development Plans in 2004-2006 and SAPARD. The main objective of this paper is to identify the amount and degree of accessing funds from EU rural development in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the year 2012. The Estonian Rural Development Plan 2007–2013, Rural Development Programme for Latvia 2007–2013 and Rural Development Programme for Lithuania 2007 – 2013 cover the entire territory of these three states which is under convergence region. The data sources used in this article are from official statistical institutions such as Eurostat (European Commission), Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, The Lithuanian Department of Statistics, Official Statistics Portal and Statistics Estonia.*

Keywords: agriculture, axes, EAFDR, measure, rural development

JEL classification: **Q18, R11, R58**

1. Introduction

The Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania are part of the Baltic States located on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea and are members of the European Union since 2004.

The three countries have experience in implementing EU funds considering that benefited from the following programs in 2004-2006:

- in Estonia were prepared and implemented two strategic programming documents: the Estonian Rural Development Plan 2004-2006 (ERDP 2004 - 2006) financed from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), Guarantee Section and the Estonian National Development Plan 2004-2006 (ENDP 2004 -2006) financed from the Financial Instrument

for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG), the EAGGF Guidance Section, and the European Regional Development Fund (the ERDF) (technical assistance for the development plan) ;

- in Latvia have been implemented two programs: Single Programming Document and Rural Development Plan 2004–2006;
- in Lithuania were implemented 3 different programmes, Single Programming Document (SPD), Rural Development Plan (RDP) and Special Rural Support Programme (SRSP) which is funded nationally.

The Estonian Rural Development Plan 2007–2013, Rural Development Programme for Latvia 2007–2013 and Rural Development Programme for Lithuania 2007 – 2013 cover the period from 1 January 2007 to the end of 2013 and have been prepared following the provisions of the Council Regulation EC No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). These programs cover the whole geographical territory of Estonia, Latvia, Republic of Lithuania and the entire territory of these three states is regarded as a convergence region, which means that in all administrative units of the NUTS second level, the GDP is below 75% of the EU average.

2. Data used for the analysis

For achieving this article have been used data from the official statistical institutions such as Eurostat (European Commission), Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, The Lithuanian Department of Statistics, Official Statistics Portal, Statistics Estonia. There were used information from national development programs of the three states and Rural Development in the European Union - Statistical and economic information - 2012. These data have been analyzed, processed and interpreted in order to observe the importance of the agriculture and rural development in a comparative approach between Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the European Union, the funds allocated to these countries and level of accessing funds from the EAFRD to the year 2012.

3. Information about the economy and agriculture of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

The total area of Estonia is 45.227 km², including 43.200 km² of land area. More than a half of the land area is forest land, one third is agricultural land, and one fifth is covered by mires and bogs. Estonia is one of the smallest countries in Europe, both by area and by population. Of the EU-27 countries, only Cyprus, Malta and Luxembourg have smaller size of population. Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia have smaller territory than Estonia.(Estonian Rural Development Plan 2007–2013, Ministry of Agriculture, 2008)

The total surface area of Lithuania is 65.3 thousand sq. km. Lithuanian population is 3 million in 2012.

Latvia occupies a territory of 64 589 km², of which the inland waters take up 2543 km² and dry land 62 046 km², including agricultural land 24 710 km², forest 29 503 km²; the total protected area is 10 523 km².(Rural Development Programme for Latvia 2007–2013, Ministry of Agriculture, 2011)

In the following will be performed a short comparison of economy and agriculture of the three states based on various criteria and indicators such as population, GDP,

GDP per capita, the total area, area used in agriculture, the number of farms the number of people working in agriculture.

Table 1. Data relating to the economy and agriculture of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

Country	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	EU (27 countries)
Criteria				
GDP – Current Prices (Millions of euro) (2012)	16.998,2	22.258	32.781,8	12.899.149,5
Population (2012)	1.339.662	2.041.763	3.007.758	503.663.601
Gross domestic product (GDP) at current market prices (Euro per inhabitant) (2012)	12.688,42	10.901,36	10.899,08	25.610,64
Agricultural Labour Input Statistics: absolute figures (1 000 annual work units) (2012)	24,6	80,1	141,5	10.134,7
Share of Agricultural Labour Input in total population	1,84%	3,92%	4,70%	2,01%
The total area (km ²) (2010)	45.227	64.589	65.300	-
Utilised agricultural area in farms (km ²) (2010)	9.409,3	17.962,9	27.425,6	-
Share of utilized agricultural area in total area farms	20,80%	27,81%	42,00%	-
Total number of holdings (2010)	19.610	83.390	199.910	-

Source: Author processing data from Eurostat, European Commission

Lithuania is the largest country in the group of the three Baltic countries with an area of 65.300 km². With an similar area is Latvia and Estonia is the country with the smallest area (45.227 km²). Regarding agricultural area where Estonia has the smallest percentage of area used in agriculture (20.8% in total) with a total area of 9409 km², in Latvia are used for agriculture 179.620 hectares and area used for agriculture in Lithuania is 27.425 km² representing 42% of all area.

After analyzing data from the Eurostat, it can be seen that the country's GDP registered the highest value is Lithuania (32.781,8 millions of euro). Lithuania has also the highest number of population. However, the highest value of the GDP per inhabitant it can be observed for Estonia (12.688 euro / person). In all 3 person a notice in Estonia (12,688 euros / person). In all three neighboring countries value of the indicator is approximately equal to or less than half the average of the EU countries where this indicator takes the value of 25.610 euro in 2012.

Regarding the number of people working in agriculture in Lithuania is recorded the highest number of people working in the sector (141.500 people representing 4.7% of the total population of the country). Reported at EU level, all persons engaged in agriculture in the three countries is only 246.200 which represents 2.4% of total persons employed in agriculture in the EU.

Fewest farms are observed in Estonia (19.610), in Latvia are 83.390 holdings and Lithuania has the most holdings (199.910).

4. The amount of funds allocated for 2007-2013 from the EAFRD for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

For rural development policy at EU level, through EAFDR was allocated a budget of 96.3 billion euro for the period 2007-2013. The total amount of funds for the three countries compared in this article is 3.543.905.000 euro, allocated as follows:

Estonia have funds amounting to 723.737.000 euro, Latvia (1.054.374.000 €) and Lithuania received 1.765.794.000 euro.

The diversified level of agricultural development and directions of evolution of rural areas in the individual EU countries results in complex and diversified problems for the agricultural policy. That was a basic reason of giving a relatively great freedom to the individual member states to choose measures within the individual axes of the Rural Development Programmes. The allocation of expenses to the individual measures Member States should ensure that synergies among the economic, environmental and social aspects and, by assumption, it is supposed to reflect the priorities of rural development. The analysis of the allocation of expenses within the national rural development programmes will indicate similarities and differences of the use of the CAP support in the regional aspect. (Sadowski, A., Czubak, W., 2013)

Table 2. The amount of funds allocated for 2007-2013 through EAFRD for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

Axes/ Measures*	Estonia 000 €	Estonia % axis	Latvia 000 €	Latvia % axis	Lithuania 000 €	Lithuania % axis
111	3.200	1.21%	893	0.23%	20.008	2.67%
112	13.174	4.99%	11.014	2.78%	64.063	8.53%
113	0	0.00%	21.375	5.39%	101.497	13.52%
114	2.976	1.13%	6	0.00%	5.593	0.75%
121	147.038	55.69%	243.351	61.41%	330.321	44.00%
122	15.506	5.87%	14.395	3.63%	11.031	1.47%
123	32.122	12.17%	53.581	13.52%	113.220	15.08%
124	9.299	3.52%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
125	31.374	11.88%	25.556	6.45%	81.913	10.91%
131	959	0.36%	5.602	1.41%	0	0.00%
132	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1.710	0.23%
141	3.150	1.19%	19.454	4.91%	21.331	2.84%
142	5.236	1.98%	1.019	0.26%	0	0.00%
Total Axis 1	264.034	36.48%	396.245	37.58%	750.686	42.51%
212	42.811	16.00%	185.770	45.23%	245.846	38.29%
213	6.922	2.59%	10.303	2.51%	1.598	0.25%
214	168.710	63.05%	180.055	43.84%	277.035	43.15%
215	17.379	6.50%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
216	3.170	1.18%	0	0.00%	4.640	0.72%
221	3.425	1.28%	0	0.00%	44.372	6.91%
223	0	0.00%	15.850	3.86%	43.999	6.85%
224	25.151	9.40%	12.058	2.94%	2.318	0.36%
225	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2.208	0.34%
226	0	0.00%	6.693	1.63%	12.000	1.87%
227	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	8.000	1.25%
Total Axis 2	267.568	36.97%	410.729	38.95%	642.014	36.36%
311	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	24.458	12.38%
312	53.514	56.37%	97.551	54.92%	88.494	44.81%
313	0	0.00%	8.797	4.95%	35.065	17.75%
321	0	0.00%	69.955	39.38%	0	0.00%
322	41.428	43.63%	0	0.00%	49.492	25.06%
323	0	0.00%	1.317	0.74%	0	0.00%
Total Axis 3	94.941	13.12%	177.620	16.85%	197.508	11.19%
411	10.566	15.40%	20.848	74.10%	0	0.00%
413	42.262	61.60%	0	0.00%	83.899	77.98%
421	2.058	3.00%	2.603	9.25%	3.336	3.10%
431	13.721	20.00%	4.685	16.65%	20.353	18.92%
Total Axis 4	68.607	9.48%	28.136	2.67%	107.588	6.09%
Technical assistance 511	28.586	100.00%	41.645	100.00%	67.997	100.00%
511	28.586	3.95%	41.645	3.95%	67.997	3.85%
TOTAL	723.737	100.00%	1.054.374	100.00%	1.765.794	100.00%

Source: Author processing data from Rural Development in the European Union - Statistical and economic information – 2012, European Commission

* The axes and measures are as follows:

Axis 1: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector: 111 - Vocational training and information actions, 112-Setting up of young farmers, 113 - Early retirement, 114 - Use of advisory services, 121 - Modernisation of agricultural holdings, 122 - Improvement of the economic value of forests, 123 - Adding value to agricultural and forestry products, 124 - Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and the forestry sector, 125 - Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry, 131 - Meeting standards based on Community legislation, 132 - Participation of farmers in food quality schemes, 131 - Semi-subsistence farming, 142 - Producer groups;

Axis 2: Improving the environment and the countryside: 212 - Payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas, 213 - Natura 2000 payments and payments linked to Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD), 214 - Agri-environment payments, 215 - Animal welfare payments, 216 - Non-productive investments, 221 - First afforestation of agricultural land, 223 - First afforestation of non-agricultural land, 224 - Natura 2000 payments, 225 - Forest-environment payments, 226 - Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions, 227 - Non-productive investments;

Axis 3: Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy: 311- Diversification into non-agricultural activities, 312 - Business creation and development, 313 - Encouragement of tourism activities, 321 - Basic services for the economy and rural population, 322- Village renewal and development, 323- Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage;

Axis 4: Implementation of the Leader approach: 411 - Implementing local development strategies. Competitiveness, 413 - Implementing local development strategies. Quality of life/diversification, 421 - Implementing cooperation projects, 431 - Running the local action group, acquiring skills and animating the territory as referred to in Article 59.

According to data from Rural Development in the European Union-Statistical and economic information-2012 of the three countries noted the following:

In Estonia were allocated funds amounting to 723.73 million euro divided into axes as follows: for Axis 1, Improving the Competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector and Axis 2, Improving the environment and the countryside, percentages are approximately equal, respectively of 36.48% for Axis 1 and 36.97% for Axis 2, with the amount of 264.034.000€ and 267.568.000€. Under Axis 1, for Measure 121 Modernisation of agricultural holdings were awarded more than half of the value of the funds, the amount of 147.038.000€. Within axis 2 dominates Measure 214, Agri-environment payments with funds worth over 168 million euro. For Axis 3 the amounts available are 94.941.000€. Within this axis were able to access funds for 2 Measures, namely 312 - Business creation and development having allocated the sum of 53.514.000€ representing 56,37% of the total axis and Measure 322 - Village renewal and development with funds amounting to 41.428.000€. For axis 4, Implementation of the Leader approach the funds allocated have the value of 68.607.000€, representing 9,48% of the total amount allocated to Estonia.

The amount of funds allocated to Latvia is 1.054.374.000€, 45% more than in the case of Estonia. Most of the funds are allocated to axis 2 (410.729.000 €, representing 38,95% of the total funds), followed by axis 1 with sums amounting to 396.245.00€ (37,58%). The largest sums for Axis 2 shall be allocated to the measure 212, Payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas (185.770 € representing 45,23% of total axis 2). Under axis 3, from the total of 177.620.000 €, the sum of 97.551.000 € that is 54,92% shall be allocated to the measure 312, Business creation and development.

From the EAFRD most funds were allocated to Lithuania, respectively the amount of 1.765.794.000 €. We can say that the value is 2,44 times higher in comparison with Estonia, and with 67% higher than the funds allocated to Latvia. In the case of Lithuania, for Axis 1 is allocated the most funds, respectively, 42,51%, meaning the amount of 750.686 million of euro, followed by Axis 2 with a variable of 36,36% and an allocation of 642.014.000 € and Axis 3 with a percentage of 11,19% which is 197.508.000 €.

According processed and analyzed data we can see some similarities in terms of allocation:

- under axis 1, Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, all three States allocate most funds for measure 121, Modernisation of agricultural holdings, which denotes the importance of modernising the pursuit of agricultural holdings through a better use of human resources and factors of production;
- within axis 2, Improving the environment and the countryside, in all three countries analysed so far predominate 214 - Agri-environment payments, with the largest amount of funds allocated to this measure in the total Axis 2, respectively the amount of 168.710.000 € in Estonia (which represents 23,3% of the total value funds intended for Estonia), 180.055.000 € in Latvia and 277.035.000 € in Lithuania.
- within the framework of the axis 3, Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy, in all three countries, the largest part of the funds earmarked for this axis were directed to measure 312, Business creation and development, which means that those countries considered priority the overall objective of the measure aimed at the sustainable development of rural economy by encouraging non-farm activities in order to increase the number of jobs and additional incomes. The highest percentage of appropriations on this measure in this axis can be found in Estonia (56,37%) with the amount of 53.514.000 €, while in Latvia have the highest value of funds on this measure (97.551.000 €), but that represents 54,92% of the total axis 3.
- within the framework of the axis 4, Lithuania registered a total of 107.588.000 € which means 6,09% of total funds allocated, while Estonia benefits from 68.607.000 € that represent 9,48% of the funds allocated for this country and Latvia is ranked the last place having only 28.136.000 € representing 2,67% of the total.
- for axis 5 Technical assistance, 511, all three countries have similar percentages for the support of this axis, respectively a percentage of 3,85% to 3,95% and amounts to € 28.586.000 in Estonia, 41.645.000 € in Latvia and 67.997.000 € in Lithuania.

5. The degree of accessing funds in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania until September 2012.

With the EU funding support it is expected to increase the competitiveness of the rural areas creating attractive living and working environment by introducing a complex problem solving for land owners involving land fragmentation, reduction of irrational local road network, lack of infrastructural facilities, and etc. (Pasakarnis, Giedrius, Maliene, Vida, 2011, pg. 1424).

Regarding the degree of access of funds are listed below sums granted until September 2012 under the EAFRD for analyzed countries.

Table 3. Financial execution per Member State, programming period 2007-2013

Axes/ Measures	Estonia		Latvia		Lithuania	
	000 €	% axis	000 €	% axis	000 €	% axis
111	927	0.61%	335	0.14%	9.025	1.86%
112	11.900	7.85%	6.254	2.62%	62.423	12.88%
113	0	0%	11.710	4.91%	63.153	13.03%
114	2.470	1.63%	5	0.00%	941	0.19%
121	93.704	61.79%	164.595	68.99%	264.342	54.55%
122	5.110	3.37%	2.523	1.06%	6.715	1.39%
123	13.853	9.13%	21.028	8.81%	42.743	8.82%
124	205	0.13%	0	0%	0	0%
125	19.138	12.62%	12.969	5.44%	26.675	5.51%
131	886	0.58%	3.010	1.26%	0	0%
132	0	0%	0	0%	58	0.01%
141	2.539	1.67%	15.500	6.50%	8.480	1.75%
142	923	0.61%	645	0.27%	0	0%
Total Axis 1	151.656	35.42%	238.576	37.30%	484.555	49.46%
212	34.955	20.50%	157.476	55.13%	204.597	51.32%
213	2.773	1.63%	8.412	2.95%	1.035	0.26%
214	110.336	64.70%	106.303	37.22%	151.554	38.01%
215	12.344	7.24%	0	0%	0	0%
216	1.180	0.69%	0	0%	0	0%
221	243	0.14%	0	0%	14.218	3.57%
223	0	0%	8.045	2.82%	17.608	4.42%
224	8.696	5.10%	3.913	1.37%	1.171	0.29%
225	0	0%	0	0%	205	0.05%
226	0	0%	1.480	0.52%	6.506	1.63%
227	0	0%	0	0%	1.810	0.45%
Total Axis 2	170.529	39.83%	285.629	44.66%	398.704	40.69%
311	0	0%	0	0%	4.306	10.43%
312	24.257	42.41%	41.223	44.92%	16.966	41.09%
313	0	0%	2.384	2.60%	9.417	22.81%
321	0	0%	47.355	51.60%	0	0%
322	32.937	57.59%	0	0%	10.599	25.67%
323	0	0%	817	0.89%	0	0%
Total Axis 3	57.194	13.36%	91.778	14.35%	41.287	4.21%
411	940	3.13%	0	0%	0	0%
413	22.519	75.10%	8.496	84.54%	8.190	54.97%
421	108	0.36%	0	0%	31	0.21%
431	6.419	21.41%	1.554	15.46%	6.677	44.82%
Total Axis 4	29.985	7.00%	10.050	1.57%	14.898	1.52%
Technical assistance 511	18.769	100.00%	13.561	100.00%	40.294	100.00%
Technical assistance 511	18.769	4.38%	13.561	2.12%	40.294	4.11%
TOTAL	428.133	100.00%	639.594	100.00%	979.739	100.00%

Source: Author processing data from Rural Development in the European Union - Statistical and economic information – 2012, European Commission

Regarding the degree of access to funds, we find the highest value for Lithuania (979.739.000 €). If we make a calculation by reference to the total amount, Latvia has the highest level of access to funds, it is over 60%, but also the other countries have similar percentages of 59.1% for Estonia and 55.5% for Lithuania.

In all three countries, the largest high grade access occurs for Technical assistance, 511, where all States have access to 100%.

In Estonia, the highest degree of access it was registered for Axis 2, Improving the environment and the countryside that is 39,83% of the total funds accessed, with a value of 170.529.000. Measure 214, Agri-environment payments was the most accessed under this axis. For Axis 1, the percentage of accessing funds is 35,42% with the amount of 170.529.000€. In this axis, to measure 121 were collected the most funds, 93.704.000 €. From Axis 3 were accessed funds worth 57.194.000 €, respectively 13.36% of the total funds paid to this country. Within Axis 3, for Measure 322 Village renewal and development has achieved 57,54% of these funds and for Measure 312 were received funds of 24.257.000€. For Axis 4 were accessed funds worth 29.925.000€ representing 43,7% of the total funds allocated to this axis.

In Latvia, as in the case of Estonia, the highest level of access has registered for Axis 2, where there were received 285.629.000 €, respectively 44,66%. Under this axis, measure 212, Payments to farmers in Areas with Handicaps, other than Mountain Areas was the most accessed and managed to bring 157.476.000 € that is 55,13%. For Axis 1 Improving the Competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector were charged 238.576.000 €, respectively 37,3% of all funds accessed and the harnessed measure is 121, which brought a total of 164.595.000 € equivalent to 68,99% of the total axis. For Axis 3, Latvia has received 91.778.000€ representing 14,35% of the total funds collected. The most used measure was 321 Basic services for the economy and rural populations with the amount of 47.355.000€. For Axis 4 have received funds amounting to 10.050.000€.

As in the other two countries, we can say that in Lithuania the most accessed measure under Axis 1, has been 121, with an amount of 264.342.000€, respectively 54.55% of total axis. Axis 1 has the highest percentage (49,46%) and a value of 484.555.000€ funds received. Under Axis 2, the most accessed measure has been 212 who received an amount of 204.597.000€ that is 51,32%. For the Axis 3, the most used measure was 312, which received a total of 16.966.000 € out of a total of 41.287.000€. From the axis 4 were used 13,8% of the funds available on this axis, respectively the amount of 14.898.000€.

6. In conclusion

The three countries have experience in implementing EU funds considering that benefited from rural Development Plans in 2004-2006 and SAPARD.

For rural development policy at EU level through EAFDR was allocated a budget of 96,3 billion euro for the period 2007-2013. The total amount of funds for the three countries compared in this article is 3.543.905.000 euro, allocated as follows: Estonia have funds amounting to 723.737.000 euro, Latvia (1.054.374.000€) and Lithuania received 1.765.794.000 euro.

Lithuania is the largest country in the group of the three Baltic countries with an area of 65.300 km², GDP recorded the highest value (32.781,8 millions of euro) and has the largest number of the population (3.007.758). However, the highest value of the indicator GDP /person we observe in Estonia (12.688 euros / person). Lithuania

recorded the highest number of people working in the sector (141.500 people). The farms are less in Estonia (19.610), in Latvia are 83.390 farms and in Lithuania are more farms (199.910).

Regarding the degree of access to funds until September 2012 we find the highest value for Lithuania (979.739.000€). If we make a calculation by reference to the total amount results that Latvia has the highest level of access to funds, it is over 60%, but and the other countries have similar percentages of 59.1% for Estonia and 55.5% for Lithuania.

In Estonia, the highest degree of access it was registered for Axis 2, Improving the environment and the countryside that is 39,83% of the total funds accessed, with a value of 170.529.000. Measure 214, Agri-environment payments was the most accessed under this axis. In Latvia, as in the case of Estonia, the highest level of access has registered for Axis 2, where there were received 285.629.000 €, respectively 44,66%. Under this axis, measure 212, Payments to farmers in Areas with Handicaps, other than Mountain Areas was the most accessed and managed to bring 157.476.000 € that is 55,13%. As in the other two countries, we can say that in Lithuania the most accessed measure under Axis 1, has been 121, with an amount of 264.342.000€, respectively 54.55% of total axis. Axis 1 has the highest percentage (49,46%) and a value of 484.555.000€ funds received.

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