

ORIC Newsletter

University of Agriculture, Faisalabad

May 16 to 31, 2025



UAF ORGANIZES 1st MEETING OF ORICs FORUM-2025

University experts called for bridging gaps between academia and industry to propel and nurture an ecosystem of innovation, product development and commercialization in the country. This was echoed in the 1st meeting of ORICs Forum-2025 which was organized by Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC), University of Agriculture, Faisalabad at CAS Auditorium, wherein Chairperson Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC) Prof. Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan (HI, SI), Chairman IPO Pakistan Mr. Farukh Amil, UAF Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, Prof. Tahir Chaudhry, President & CEO, Pakistan Institute of Entrepreneurship, Dr. Dr. Habib Aslam Gaba FCCI, Engineer Abrar Ahmad Deputy Director/ORICs Focal Person Higher Education Commission, Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Rao Zahid Abbass, Principal Officer AIRI, Prof. Dr. Junaid Ali Khan Director ORIC MNSUA, Multan, Prof. Dr. Amanullah Malik Rector TUF, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Imran Arshad Director ORIC UAF and other notables expressed their views. Besides, a panel discussion was also held with Director ORIC, The University of Faisalabad Prof. Dr. Zahir Ahmad Zahir, University of Sargodha Director ORIC Prof. Dr. Ahmad Bilal, Dr. Inam Aqil Director PU, Lahore, Ms Tasneem Director ORIC Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi, and Engineer Abrar Ahmad of Higher Education Commission took part in the discussion. Addressing the participants as chief guest, Chairperson, Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC) Prof. Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan said that redefining higher education is a challenge and with this background, holding of ORIC Forum-2025 could be a very powerful tool to reach out and learn from each other's experiences. He said the UAF has a pool of animal and crop genes, that need to be protected by IP. He said that water is major talking point due to new upheaval with India the trans-boundary water



issues are emerge coming under discussion. He said that due to free water availability, no one cares and respects the water adding that water pricing could be an option to arrest the growing and unchecked water losses. He anticipated that ORIC Forum would become a vibrant

“Faculty should spend summer vacation in relevant industry to witness and operations and identify the missing areas where attention or investment could make a big change, this would provoke industry to invite the faculty and make investment on research projects”

platform and prove its metal as a powerful tool to nurture and promote an ecosystem of research, innovation, product development and commercialization. Earlier, UAF Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali in his welcome address, said that at UAF, we consider innovation in research as the seed; its commercialization is the harvest for national prosperity. Highlighting the objective of creation

of the ORICs Forum, he symbolizes unity in purpose among Pakistani universities to collectively enhance the quality and relevance of research, foster university-industry linkages, promote entrepreneurship, startups, and patent culture, build an IP capacity and technology transfer mechanisms, and address grand societal challenges through innovation. He pointed out a five-point agenda which comprises National Research Commercialization Policy, Thematic Clusters of Excellence, IP and Technology Transfer Hub, ORIC Performance and Capacity Index, and Youth Innovation and Incubation Network. He described it vital to align our institutional objectives with globally recognized standards of academic excellence and societal impact. He highlighted his strategic vision incorporates key components of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF), and Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). He stressed the need to revive HEC ORIC Policy 2021 in the light of proceedings of this forum.

Mr. Farukh Amil, Chairman, IPO Pakistan cautioned that future wars would be fought on IP and theft of an idea is not an ordinary crime but can put a long lasting impact on socio-economic development of a country or society. He told that his office facilitated HEC in establishing Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) to nurture innovation in the varsities to develop, expand, enhance and manage the university's research programs and to link research activities directly to the educational, social and economic priorities of the university and its broader community. He underscored the need to include IP in the national agenda and significant importance be given to it in the academic curriculum at school, college and university level. He expressed his dismay over the societal attitude towards IP Rights and feared that in this environment where an idea is stolen, research is not in safe hands, how come an industry come and invest on R&D activities. Referring towards new mantra “Invent and earn”, he said youth need hopes and confidence that their ideas would not be stolen and that such intellectual theft would be consider a serious crime rather a trick to progress and prosperity, he added.



Prof. Tahir Chaudhry, President & CEO, Pakistan Institute of Entrepreneurship said that there were 278 universities in the country and only 7 universities are taking care of agriculture and its allied disciplines. He presented a list of major challenges to which the country is confronting with and stressed the need to work for removing the imbalance between imports and exports. He asked the participants to voice their heads and advocate for growing such crops which put a dent on the growing agricultural imports. He presented an example of camel milk which has tremendous nutrient value and significance in human health said that in Tharparkar Sindh no one is ready to purchase camel milk available @ Rs 50/kg so we need to hold the hands of such hardworking lower class of the society by establishing a collection and processing unit there coupled with arrangements of its export. He revealed that out of 75000 IT students entering every year in the undergraduate programs, only 10 percent are of useful stuff and rest is just called IT graduates without any skill or spark serve the sector. He was of the view that everyone knows that 40 percent farm produces losses from farm to dining table, but we could not see any tangible initiative to save this massive loss.

Director ORIC Prof. Dr. Muhammad Imran Arshad underscored the need to make

sincere efforts to achieve such frameworks in research, teaching and knowledge excellence by publication, patents, case studies, graduate employment, students' feedback and partnership and commercialization of its goods & services the industrial partners. He emphasized to review the successes so far made and shape the new agenda of action plan.

Director ORIC MNSUM, Prof. Dr. Junaid Ali Khan described innovation as a new currency which is globally recognized. He underlined the need to put prime focus on innovation and commercialization by placing right people for right job. He suggested to have Business Clubs in the varsities where business ideas and issues could openly be discussed. He also highlighted success stories of his office as within a very short span of time, his ORIC embraced position in top W category in ORIC Scorecard.

Director BIC Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad said that UAF was the first universities of the country having faculty led startup policy that encourages the faculty to register his/her

“University should segregate professors as fully academic and research professors to promote innovation & Commercialization in the varsities”



company with SECP and enjoy 10-year tax holiday. Engineer Abrar Ahmad, Higher Education Commission, said that HEC takes such feedback from the varsities to

“ORICs Forum suggests tangible changes in ORICs Assessment Mechanism”

improve and refine its policies thereby to lead the research into a commercialized manner creating resources for R&D organizations. He told that after a span of every five years, HEC examines the progress and bottlenecks in meeting its targets thereby to plug the gaps and to pave the way for constant improvements. He said that there were only 53 percent universities having full time Director ORIC so appointment of full-time Director ORIC is essential to lead the way towards making the dreams into reality. He told that HEC used to revise its KPIs keeping in view the emerging trends and challenges and to fulfill the need of capacity building HEC has erected a national academy of higher education. He revealed that realizing the need and feedback from the varsities, HEC after NRPU, is mulling to relaunch Grand Challenge Fund followed by various other programs.

Dr. Habib Aslam Gaba emphasized the need to make ORICs as strong hubs of sustainable research and innovation by strengthening a research culture for securing research funding, capacity building and filling startups gaps. He urged the academia to align their skill-sets with that of market trends and challenges as there are numerous case studies of various universities of the world wherein best industry people were engaged with academia for innovation and commercialization. He told that at FCCI, a RFI portal would be launched shortly with a list of industry problems highlighting its needs from the academia thus the academia could match its expertise with the industrial challenges to gear up the pace of innovation and commercialization. He said there was a time when good answer of a question was appreciated but today thanks to ChatGPT and IA, good question is getting praise so, in the changing world, we need to transform our priorities by aligning our agenda with the emerging trends and

challenges, he added. He also advocated more reward and share for the researchers for innovation and commercialization. He appreciated holding of ORICs Forum and stressed upon the need to make this form a vibrant consortium of ORICs for knowledge sharing and making a joint voice for uplifting the research, innovation and commercialization culture in the varsities.

Prof. Dr. Ahmad Bilal, Director ORIC from University of Sargodha told that his university achieved tremendous success in ORIC scorecard as in 2023, it was at 30th position, but due to recruitment of regular Director ORIC and supporting staff, this office secured 66 marks in the recent ORIC ranking. He told that his office has not only submitted 41 IPs, inking 142 industrial links and successfully commercialized 24 labs but also fetched a huge Chinese investment worth billions of rupees in BOT model adding that due to his office, UoS has embraced remarkable success to achieve the economic self-reliance. He called upon giving due respect and importance to the ORIC as HEC in its latest policy enshrines Director ORIC as 2nd prime officer after the Vice Chancellor. He emphasized the need to review the ranking policy of ORIC self-assessment scorecard adding that there are numerous points that need to be pondered upon.

Director IPO Pakistan, Dr. Muhammad Ismail termed IP rights vital for commercialization. He said that without IP protection, commercialization is at risk. He told that patents are granted by the government on inventing new things. He presented various examples of IP rights as copy right, trademark, trade secrets, geographical indication, plant breeding rights, genetic resource and traditional knowledge to be made a part of the IP arrangements. On this occasion, a Technology Exhibition was also held at Expo Center and the participants of ORIC Forum visited and inspected the stalls.

“Appointment of full time Director ORIC and supporting staff would help the varsities to flourish and promote a culture of innovation and commercialization”



ORIC ORGANIZES PANEL DISCUSSION DURING ORICs-FORUM-2025



The panel discussion was conducted by Director ORIC, the University of Sargodha Prof. Dr. Ahmad Bilal and the panelists were Prof. Dr. Zahir Ahmad Zahir Director ORIC TUF, Prof. Tahir Chaudhry, President & CEO, Pakistan Institute of Entrepreneurship, Air Commodore Fawad Ahmad Director ORIC Air University, Dr. Inam Aqil Director ORIC Punjab University and Ms Tasneem Director ORIC Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi.

The following were the salient points of the panel discussion

- The panelists were of the view that to make the academia industry linkage happened in true sense, we need to advocate the government to give special tax rebate or other incentives to those industrial partners who join hands with academia and fund for commissioned research.
- It was suggested that ORICs should connect the interested industrial party to the concerned faculty member to institutionalize the commercialization and consultancy process.
- Faculty with such expertise, should freely hold frequent meetings with potential Industrial partners, witness their real time on ground problems this would, enable them to exchange views and reach to the solution of the issue. This way, both ends could meet the objectives.
- It was emphasized that HEC should expand the duration of TDF projects adding that two years are not sufficient to get the product fully commercialized. The industrial people usually test the product extensively by introducing prototypes prior to make the same commercialized, so two years are very limited duration to bear the real fruits of commercialization.
- It was emphasized that the faculty needs to look around and they will find the problem very near to them, think upon them, spare time to identify the cause and map its solution. With this mindset, if they

would move around, this would not a big deal to find multiple social, behavioral, and industrial problems and no one would arrest their minds to think and reach to the solutions.

- This idea was appreciated that universities make it mandatory to send their faculty to the relevant industry in summer vacation to enhance their professional capacity and enable them to witness the ground realities and think upon their durable solutions.
- It was revealed during panel discussion that some top ranked universities of the world have made it mandatory for the faculty to have a company if they want to remain in the faculty strength, so, universities need to encourage the faculty to make their companies thereby to flourish the culture of innovation, product development and commercialization.
- It was also discussed that universities should distinguish their faculty into two categories (i) fully academic professors (ii) research professors. Chinese University's examples were given where they make three categories Tier-I, Tier-II and Tier-III, and a professor placed in Tier-I enjoys plenty of liberty and appreciations due to his product commercialization followed by that professor with product development and the professor with only innovation without doing or involving in the further process. So, the same should be replicated here in our universities.
- It was realized in the discussion that university faculty members should join hands with academia of engineering universities and start reverse engineering of smart agricultural machineries, this would give push to the small farmer to mechanize its farming.
- There were unanimous views, that faculty should map his research with that of problem, an industry is facing and make frequent meeting with industry to examine the problem area to reach to the solution.

MALYASIAN DELEGATION DISCUSSES R&D COLLABORATION WITH UAF

The University Sultan Zainal Abidin (UNISZA) and University of Agriculture, Faisalabad inked a Letter of Intent (LoI) to strengthen mutual cooperation and collaboration in the field of science & technology. The LoI signing ceremony was held at Meeting Room of the Vice Chancellor's Office wherein Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali witnessed the ceremony. During meeting with visiting delegation, Dr. Zulfiqar Ali said that UAF in collaboration with Malaysian High Commission, Islamabad is used to frequently hold seminars every year to explore new R&D and business opportunities between the two brotherly countries. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali hoped that after signing of LoI, both institution will work together in exploring and R&D cooperation. The meeting was attended by Prof. Dr. Nadeem Akbar, Prof. Dr. Bushra Sadia, Prof. Dr. Amir Maqsood, Prof. Dr. Waseem Akram, Prof. Dr. Ahmad Sattar Khan, Prof. Dr. Abdur Rehman Bhatti, Dr. Tehsin Azhar, Dr. Muhammad Irfan, Dr. Muhammad Ahsan. Earlier, the Malaysian Delegation was received by Director ORIC Prof. Dr. Muhammad Imran Arshad, and Dean Faculty of Agriculture Prof. Dr. Ghulam Murtaza .



POLICY EXPERT DR. MUHAMMAD EJAZ QURESHI HOLDS MEETING WITH DIRECTOR ORIC

Seasoned agricultural policy expert Dr. Muhammad Ejaz Qureshi from Australian National University, Australia, who is currently in the University for an ongoing capacity building workshop on Agricultural Policy, paid a visit to ORIC and held meeting with Director ORIC Prof. Dr. Muhammad Imran Arshad. He was flanked by Prof. Dr. Asif Kamran, Director Agri Policy, Law and Governance Center. During the meeting, matters pertaining to further cementing mutual R&D cooperation between both the institution came under discussion. Dr. Muhammad Imran Arshad praised Dr. Qureshi's work in writing and analyzing various policies enumerating different aspects of the policy intervention, need assessment, and bottlenecks in fully implementation of the existing policies.



UAF ORGANIZES AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COOPERATIVES

Experts at International Conference at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad called for reviving cooperatives for sustainable agricultural and rural development to overcome the deepening food insecurity and rural development challenges.

They addressed the international conference on cooperatives for sustainable agricultural and rural development organized by the Institute of Agricultural Extension, Education and Rural Development, Faculty of Social Sciences, UAF in collaboration with Cooperative Department, Government of Punjab.

Chairperson, Punjab Higher Education Commission Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan said cooperatives were recognized worldwide as institutions for promoting sustainable agricultural and rural development and believed to satisfy the social, cultural, and economic needs of a society. He said the agriculture sector is the largest contributor to our economy which provides 37.4 per cent of total employment. However, unplanned urbanization and the turning the agricultural land into housing projects are rapidly reducing arable land and creating serious municipal challenges. The increasing migration to urban areas is due to low income of the farming community and limited employment opportunities for the rural youth. He said that the cooperative will help the farming community to use the latest methods and tools that will definitely increase the per acre production and raise the income.

UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali said that the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC 2025), highlighting the key role cooperatives play in sustainable development worldwide with the theme of IYC-2025 "Cooperatives Build a Better World". He added that within the broader cooperative system, the agricultural cooperatives play a vital role in the overall wellbeing of rural communities, and smallholder farmers can have great benefit from cooperatives. These cooperatives enable small-scale farmers to access better markets, improve productivity through shared resources and others.

Secretary Cooperative Dr Ahmed Javed stressed upon the need for research and planning to flourish cooperative system. He added that the cooperative movement is not only crucial for economic development but also for



sustainable progress. He said that cooperatives are established on the principles of equality, mutual help and member participation in the decision-making, ensuring their needs. He said that deepening collaborations with agricultural universities of the country and globe will help address the issue with effective way.

Dr Kiran Khurshed, Director General Monitoring and Evaluation, Planning and Development Board said that they were making all out efforts to address the issues for the development of the country. She said that agricultural cooperatives in Pakistan face challenges. Addressing these challenges could enhance the impact of agricultural cooperatives and better support small-scale farmers.

CEO National Rural Support Program Rashid Bajwa said that NRSP is missioned to foster a network of grassroots level organizations to enable rural communities to plan, implement and manage developmental activities and programs for the purpose of ensuring productive employment, alleviation of poverty and improvement in the quality of life.

Muhammad Ejaz Qureshi from Australia briefed about the agricultural cooperatives in Australia evolution and success that can help Pakistan to improve the situation. Engineering Jawed Saleem Qureshi CEO Four Brother called for strengthening networking among cooperatives, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers and stressed upon the need for practical solutions for improving cooperative performance and sustainability.

Dean Faculty of Social Sciences Dr Babar Shahbaz said that we have to strengthen agricultural cooperatives and address challenges and effective financing models for advancing cooperative movement. He said that this moot meant to highlight cooperatives as people-centered and purpose-driven institutions. He said cooperatives operate according to a set of established norms and values known as Cooperative Principles as they serve as the foundation for ethical governance, collective decision making, and sustainable business practices.

Dr Tahir Yaqoob Bhatti (ZTBL President), Dr Saleem Tahir (PPCBL President), Dr M Ashfaq, Dr Asif Kamran, Dr M Rafay Muzamil, Dr Rao Sabir Sattar, Dr Gulfam Hassan, Dr Syed Amir, Dr Sadaf, and other notables also attended.





CALL FOR PROPOSALS

By

Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF)

Under

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Russia, Pakistan, China, Uzbekistan, Belarus, and Kazakhstan

PSF along with SCO member states is pleased to announce the 1st Multilateral Joint Call for R&D Project with maximum limit of funding to Pakistani Side Rs. 15.00 million per project. The Call is announced under SCO Agreement between the member states. The call for Proposals for Multilateral Joint Research and Development Projects is open in the following priority areas;

1. Adaptation to climate change: Environmental protection and restoration, conservation and rational use of natural resources

2. Life sciences: (Preventive medicine, epidemic control; healthy longevity technologies)

3. High-tech and sustainable agriculture

(A) Technologies for the production of new varieties and hybrids of plants resistant to environmental changes. (B) Development of biological and chemical means to increase crop yields and protect plants against diseases. (C) Biodiversity conservation.

4. Nanosystems and materials: (Nanotechnology for the creation of new materials)

5. Information and telecommunications technologies: (A) The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in telecommunications and transport systems (B) Microelectronics and photonics technologies.

6. Energy and energy conservation: (A) Highly efficient resource-saving energy (B) New technologies for energy generation and storage systems (C) The use of mega-science facilities for nuclear, laser, and quantum research.

7. Earth science: Soil monitoring and soil science; technologies for preventing and reducing natural risks.

8. Medicine and bio-technologies: Creation of new generation medical devices; technologies for the development of biotech medicines; the use of bio-technologies in the economy.

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

- Pakistani and counterpart scientists should come to an agreement with each other using
- their own means of communications and jointly develop and complete their project
- proposal before submitting it to PSF. PSF do not match the collaborating partners.
- Pakistani and Counterpart Collaborator /partner should

necessarily be identified in each submitted Joint Research Project Proposal submitted individually from any side.

- Proposals without collaborators / partners from at least three (03) SCO member states including Russia, Pakistan, China, Uzbekistan, Belarus, and Kazakhstan will not be processed further.
- Joint Research & Development Project must contribute towards development of Industry, Technology, Process, Techniques, Prototype, Commercialization and Innovation, leading to socio-economic uplift of both countries. Joint research proposal which will be applied in nature will be financed on priority.
- Project proposal must provide detailed information on the objectives and justification of the year wise planned joint research work, the methodology to be followed, the composition of each research team and intended time schedule
- The prescribed Proforma for Submission of Joint Research Projects should be duly filled and submitted by the Counterparts to the respective country and by the Pakistani scientists to PSF (through the online portal i.e. Research Grant Management System RGMS)
- Proposals submitted individually from any side without a counterpart or Pakistani collaborator will not be processed further.
- Curricula vitae of all the research teams should be attached
- The duration of the projects should not exceed Three Years.
- The budget for the visit of Pakistani scientists must not exceed Rs. 1.5 Million each year.
- Purpose of visits in one direction under submitted Joint Research Project should be;
- Collaborative research
- Training of Scientists
- To participate in workshops that are the part of Joint Research Project
- The present call for proposals and required information for Counterpart about the application procedure are available in English and relevant language on the respective organization's website
- The list of the respective counterpart organizations is given at the end of Guidelines.

Deadline

June 20, 2025 at ORIC-UAF
June 30, 2025 at PSF

UAF faculty members are required to submit their proposals at ORIC on or before **June 20, 2025** so that requisite permission of the competent authority may be sought well before time. No proposal will be entertained after **June 20, 2025**.

For submission of the proposals at PSF, use following link;
<https://rgms.psf.gov.pk/rgms/login.aspx>

ORIC CONDUCTS STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING



A meeting of the ORIC Steering Committee was held at Syndicate Room of the varsity. The meeting was aimed at shaping a research excellence framework, nurturing and evaluating the performance of R&D activities, screening of new research proposals, industry linkages, innovation, outreach and consultancy framework of the varsity. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali presided over the meeting while Eng. Jawed Salim Qureshi, Chairman 4B Group of Industries, Dr. Nadeem Tariq of Niha International, Mr. Rashid Ahmad, Executive Director CropLife Pakistan Association, Dr. Khalid Majeed Chairman Khalid Majeed Group of Companies, Mr. Ibrahim, Head Quality Control/Regulatory Affairs Saffron Pharma, and Ch. Asif Ali, Chief Executive Officer, Baba Farid Seed Corporation, Dr. Habib Aslam Gaba representative FCCI attended the meeting from the industry whereas Prof. Dr. Sohail Sajid, Prof. Dr. Zia ur Rehman Principal CC TT Singh, Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad Director BIC, Prof. Dr. Asif Hanif Chairman, Dept. of Chemistry, Dr. Tehseen Azhar Director External Linkages, Dr. Khuram Zia Manager Innovation and Commercialization, Mr. Zeeshan Shahid PD NICF, Mr. Umar Saeed Registrar and Ms Aisha Arshad attended the meeting. Director ORIC Prof. Dr. Muhammad Imran Arshad proceeded with the agenda of the meeting. During the meeting, it was emphasized to change R&D into R&PD (research and product development). During the meeting it was emphasized that ORIC should check and update its repository and identify the faulty, fully operational, partially operational and irreparable lab equipments so that needful action could be taken.

Addressing the participants, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali asked ORIC to identify such technologies which are ready to scale or for piloting adding that there are no impediments

in giving post-facto approval in some cases which compel short span of time for submitting the concept note to different funding agencies. He urged Director ORIC to make tangible reforms in consultancy policy and suggested 70 percent share for faculty member and 30% to ORIC/Treasurer Office. He said that research contribution of Pakistani universities is far away from the rest of the world so universities need to come forward and contribute through innovation and commercialization.

Eng. Jawed Saleem Qureshi urged the house to transform the term Research and Development to Research & Product Development (RPD) adding that Commercialization should also be integral part of the new agenda as Research, Product Development and Commercialization. He suggested that research projects should be presented and deliberated at length in Steering Committee well before their submission to the funding agencies. He said that there are plenty of problems and issues in almost every crop, fruits and vegetables from sowing to harvest and to market so one thing is needed to examine them carefully and think upon how to eradicate them on sustainable basis. He told that Chinese used to depute its best industry people in the universities thereby to learn and inculcate the art of entrepreneurship to the faculty members that helps them to nurture and promote market driven innovations at university level.

Mr. Rashid Ahmad, said that there is no alternative of hard work coupled with passion that would lead the way towards success. We need to highlight and showcase the faculty strength to the industry people by making frequent visits to the industry to know their on-ground problems, analyze them and offer them durable solution, this way they will invest your research proposals. It was suggested to involve UAF alumni national and globally, pitch them your strengths and ask them to add their value and experience to jointly find the solutions.



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