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# Green jobs and their contribution to sustainable development

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#### Abstract

The global community is facing pressing challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, and social inequalities, which demand sustainable solutions. Green jobs have emerged as a key driver of sustainable development integrating economic, social, and environmental goals. This paper examines the concept of green jobs, their role in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste management, and environmental services, and how they contribute to sustainable development. It also highlights challenges in promoting green employment, strategies for effective implementation, and their alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The findings suggest that green jobs are essential for fostering inclusive growth, reducing environmental impact, and building resilient economies. The paper concludes with recommendations for policymakers, industries, and stakeholders to enhance the creation and quality of green jobs.

**Keywords:** Green jobs, sustainable development, renewable energy, circular economy, environmental sustainability, decent work

#### Introduction

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world is experiencing unprecedented challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and growing social inequalities. These issues have pushed governments, industries, and communities to rethink development strategies in a more sustainable direction. One of the emerging solutions in this transition is the promotion of green jobs. The concept of green jobs emphasizes employment opportunities that not only provide decent work and income but also contribute directly to preserving or restoring environmental quality. Green jobs integrate the goals of economic growth, social well-being, and ecological balance, making them central to the achievement of sustainable development.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines green jobs as those that reduce environmental impact, limit greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency, and minimize waste and pollution, while ensuring decent working conditions. This definition captures the dual objectives of green jobs creating employment opportunities and promoting sustainable practices. By examining the role of green jobs in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste management, and eco-friendly infrastructure, one can better understand their overall contribution to sustainable development.

# **Understanding Green Jobs**

Green jobs span a wide range of sectors and industries, they can be categorized into:

- Renewable Energy Sector: Jobs in solar power, wind energy, hydropower, and bioenergy industries. These include engineers, technicians, researchers, and installers working to provide clean energy alternatives.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Employment in retrofitting buildings, developing energy-efficient appliances, and designing low-emission vehicles.
- Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry: Roles in organic farming, agroforestry, soil conservation, and biodiversity preservation.
- Waste Management and Recycling: Opportunities in composting, material recovery facilities, e-waste recycling, and circular economy initiatives.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Shiromani Sharma Assistant Professor, Department of Economics at Hindu Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jind, Haryana, India  Environmental Services: Jobs related to water treatment, pollution monitoring, conservation projects, and eco-tourism.

These diverse roles share a common vision: to foster environmentally sound practices while improving livelihoods.

# Green jobs and the three pillars of sustainable development

Sustainable development is based on the integration of three dimensions: economic, social, and environmental. Green jobs directly contribute to all three pillars.

### • Economic Contribution

Green jobs promote economic growth by creating new markets, industries, and technologies. The renewable energy sector alone has witnessed exponential job creation worldwide. According to IRENA (International Renewable Energy Agency), renewable energy employed more than 12 million people globally by 2022, a number expected to rise as the energy transition accelerates.

By encouraging innovation in clean technologies, green jobs stimulate entrepreneurship and attract investment. For developing countries, green employment can also reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels, strengthening economic resilience. Additionally, green jobs are often more sustainable in the long run, as they are tied to industries aligned with future global priorities.

#### • Social Contribution

Green jobs contribute to social development by ensuring decent work, reducing poverty, and improving quality of life. They often emphasize fair wages, safe working conditions, and gender inclusivity. For example, sustainable agriculture not only generates employment but also enhances food security and rural development.

Moreover, green jobs provide opportunities for marginalized communities to participate in the green economy, thereby reducing inequalities. In many cases, training programs in renewable energy installation, organic farming, or recycling empower youth and women with new skills, increasing employability. This creates a sense of dignity and inclusion while contributing to the well-being of societies.

## • Environmental Contribution

The most direct contribution of green jobs is toward the environmental pillar of sustainability. Jobs in clean energy, sustainable farming, eco-friendly construction, and waste management reduce carbon emissions, conserve natural resources, and protect biodiversity. For instance, energy-efficient building retrofits significantly cut down energy consumption, while afforestation projects restore degraded ecosystems.

Through sustainable production and consumption patterns, green jobs help break the cycle of environmental harm caused by traditional industries. This, in turn, addresses climate change, reduces pollution, and ensures that natural resources are preserved for future generations.

# Case examples of green jobs in action

# • Renewable Energy in India

India has become a global leader in renewable energy development, with large-scale solar parks and wind farms providing thousands of jobs. The government's target of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030 is expected to generate millions of employment opportunities, particularly for engineers, technicians, and project managers. These jobs are central to reducing dependence on coal while ensuring sustainable growth.

### • Sustainable Agriculture in Africa

In countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia, sustainable farming practices have created employment while addressing food insecurity. Initiatives in organic farming, drip irrigation, and agroforestry provide jobs to rural youth while conserving soil fertility and biodiversity.

# **Recycling Industries in Europe**

The European Union has promoted a circular economy, where waste is minimized, and materials are reused. This has created thousands of jobs in waste collection, sorting, and recycling industries. For example, the recycling of electronic waste provides both economic opportunities and reduces environmental hazards from toxic substances.

# **Challenges in Promoting Green Jobs**

While the potential of green jobs is immense, several challenges limit their full realization:

- **Skill Gaps:** Many green jobs require specialized training and technical skills that are not widely available. Re-skilling and up-skilling workers are crucial.
- **Policy and Institutional Support:** Lack of strong policies, financial incentives, and regulatory frameworks hinders green job creation.
- Awareness and Acceptance: Both employers and employees may resist transitioning to green practices due to lack of awareness or short-term costs.
- **Informal Employment:** In many developing countries, green jobs in areas like recycling are often informal, with poor working conditions and low wages.
- **Investment Barriers:** High upfront costs in renewable energy or eco-friendly technologies deter businesses, particularly small enterprises, from adopting green practices.

Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts from governments, international organizations, private companies, and civil society.

# Strategies to promote green jobs for sustainable development

- Education and Training: Establishing vocational training, technical programs, and university courses in renewable energy, waste management, and sustainable agriculture.
- Policy Support: Governments should implement policies that encourage clean energy, eco-friendly infrastructure, and circular economy initiatives. Subsidies, tax incentives, and grants can promote green industries.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaboration between governments and businesses can accelerate investment in green technologies and create job opportunities.
- **International Cooperation:** Global partnerships can help transfer knowledge, finance, and technology to

- developing nations to boost green employment.
- Ensuring Decent Work: Green jobs must adhere to labor standards, ensuring safe conditions, fair wages, and inclusivity.
- Awareness Campaigns: Promoting the benefits of green jobs among employers, workers, and consumers to build acceptance and participation.

### **Contribution to Global Goals**

Green jobs directly contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy): Jobs in renewable energy expand access to clean power.
- SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): Green jobs provide decent employment while ensuring sustainability.
- SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production): Recycling and sustainable agriculture reduce environmental impact.
- **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** Green jobs are instrumental in mitigating climate change.
- **SDG 15 (Life on Land):** Forestry and conservation jobs preserve ecosystems and biodiversity.

Thus, green jobs act as a unifying force, linking various SDGs and ensuring a balanced approach to development. Green jobs are not merely employment opportunities; they are a cornerstone of the global transition to sustainable development. By integrating economic growth, social inclusivity, and environmental protection, they address the pressing challenges of the 21st century. From renewable energy and sustainable agriculture to recycling and ecotourism, green jobs offer innovative solutions that ensure prosperity without compromising the needs of future generations.

However, realizing the full potential of green jobs requires overcoming challenges such as skill shortages, policy gaps, and financial barriers. Through education, policy reforms, international cooperation, and public-private collaboration, green jobs can become a driver of long-term sustainability. As nations strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and honor commitments under international agreements such as the Paris Accord, the expansion of green jobs will play a central role. Ultimately, investing in green jobs is investing in a future where development is not only prosperous but also just and environmentally sound.

#### **Objectives**

To identify the key factors that influences the contribution of green jobs to sustainable development across economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

# **Review of Literature**

The United Nations Environment Programme's (2011) [5] Towards a Green Economy report conceptualizes green investments as a route to poverty eradication and long-term resilience. UNEP argues that shifting public and private spending toward low-carbon, resource-efficient sectors creates employment while delivering environmental dividends for instance, through ecosystem restoration, sustainable agriculture, and water infrastructure. UNEP highlights co-benefits such as enhanced food security, reduced health burdens from pollution, and strengthened

rural livelihoods, stressing that outcomes depend on policy design: Subsidies, regulatory reform, and capacity-building shape who benefits. Furthermore, the report calls for integrating employment assessments into environmental planning, ensuring that social objectives (decent work, equity) are embedded in green fiscal packages. This institutional perspective positions green jobs not merely as technical outcomes but as policy instruments that can align economic, social, and ecological goals in development planning.

The OECD's (2011) [3] work on green growth frames the green-jobs discussion within national competitiveness and innovation policy. The OECD emphasizes that achieving environmental objectives and preserving economic dynamism are complementary when public policy stimulates green innovation, efficient regulation, and skills upgrading. Its analyses stress measurement challenges, defining which occupations qualify as green and capturing transitional impacts on employment composition and recommend methodological consistency for cross-country comparisons. The OECD also highlights sectoral transitions (e.g., from fossil-fuel to low-carbon industries) and the potential for regional disparities, encouraging place-based policies to support affected communities. The publication is especially useful for scholars interested in governance: it synthesizes evidence on policy mixes (taxation, R&D support, labour-market measures) that foster both environmental outcomes and stable employment prospects. The World Bank's work (2012) [6] on inclusive green growth connects environmental sustainability with poverty reduction and employment quality. The Bank argues that green investments in sustainable transport, urban waste management, energy efficiency, and rural land management, can be designed to generate local jobs while improving welfare for vulnerable populations. Importantly, the World Bank emphasizes financing constraints in low- and middleincome countries and the role of blended finance, public investment, and regulatory reform to crowd in private capital. The report also underscores the distributional dimension: without deliberate policy, green transitions risk excluding informal workers; thus, social safety nets and reskilling programs are necessary complements. This perspective is valuable for development practitioners because it situates green jobs within broader fiscal and institutional systems, emphasizing pragmatic strategies for scaling green employment in resource-constrained settings. Sachs's (2015) [4] synthesis on sustainable development presents a wide-ranging normative and empirical argument linking economic policy, social inclusion. environmental stewardship. While not exclusively devoted to employment, the work outlines how sustainable infrastructure, clean energy, and sustainable agriculture collectively reshape labour markets and create opportunities for quality jobs. Sachs highlights institutional prerequisites, effective governance, education systems aligned to green sectors, and international cooperation that enable green-job creation at scale. He also interrogates trade-offs and sequencing: for instance, balancing immediate employment needs with long-term decarbonization targets. For researchers, Sachs provides a conceptual scaffold that situates green jobs within the Sustainable Development Goals framework and underscores the multi-scalar policy efforts needed to translate green investment into equitable employment outcomes.

The International Labour Organization's (2018) [1] report on greening the economy provides a comprehensive analysis of how employment patterns change during environmental transitions. The ILO emphasizes that green jobs encompass not only positions in renewable-energy sectors but also roles across agriculture, waste management, construction, and services that directly reduce environmental impact. The report highlights pathways to make the transition just and inclusive, stressing skills development, social protection, and labour market policies that avoid job displacement. It also draws attention to quality of work, decent wages, safe conditions, and gender equity as central to the green-jobs agenda. For researchers, the ILO framework is valuable because it links macroeconomic employment trends with micro-level policy prescriptions, offering measurable indicators for monitoring progress. Overall, the report situates green jobs as both an outcome of and vehicle for sustainable development, requiring coordinated policy across education, industry, and labour institutions.

Analyses by the International Renewable Energy Agency (2020) [2] examine employment dynamics within the fastgrowing renewable-energy sector and its ripple effects on broader economies. IRENA's reports synthesize countrylevel case studies and global estimates to show how investments in solar, wind, bioenergy, and related value chains can generate substantial direct and indirect employment. Importantly, IRENA distinguishes between short-term construction jobs and longer-term operationsand-maintenance roles, underlining the need for targeted vocational training and workforce planning. The agency also discusses policy levers, procurement rules, localcontent provisions, and supportive finance that can maximize domestic job creation while avoiding supplychain bottlenecks. For sustainable-development debates, IRENA's work furnishes empirical backing that the energy transition can be labor-intensive and inclusive if guided by appropriate industrial and human-capital policies, making renewable deployment a core strategy for green-job growth.

# Research Methodology

In the study titled "Green Jobs and Their Contribution to Sustainable Development," a sample of 210 respondents from the Indian manufacturing sector, specifically located in Haryana, was selected to examine the role of green employment initiatives in promoting sustainability and long-term growth. A quantitative research design was adopted to systematically explore the key dimensions of green jobs and their influence on organizational performance and sustainable development outcomes.

A structured questionnaire was the primary tool for collecting primary data, with responses measured on a Likert scale to accurately capture participants' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of green jobs. Alongside primary data, secondary information was obtained from government

reports, company sustainability statements, and industry publications to validate and support the findings. Factor analysis was employed to identify and extract significant factors contributing to sustainable growth and organizational efficiency through green jobs.

This study provides a comprehensive statistical understanding of how green jobs contribute to sustainable development. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, corporate leaders, and strategists seeking to integrate green employment into broader sustainability goals for long-term environmental and economic resilience.

#### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis involves the systematic examination and interpretation of collected information to identify patterns, trends, and key insights. By applying various statistical tools and techniques, it facilitates the derivation of meaningful conclusions, supports informed decision-making, and ensures that the findings align with the research objectives.

Reliability Statistics					
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items				
.899	21				

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.899 for the 21 items indicates a high level of internal consistency and excellent reliability of the scale. This suggests that the statements used to assess the key factors related to green jobs and their contribution to sustainable development are highly correlated and effectively measure the intended construct. A value above 0.8 is generally considered very well in social science research.

KMO and Bartlett's Test						
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy864						
	Approx. Chi-Square	3689.919				
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	DF	210				
	Sig.	.000				

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure yielded a value of 0.864, indicating excellent sampling adequacy and confirming that the dataset on *Green Jobs and Their Contribution to Sustainable Development* is well-suited for factor analysis. Since a KMO value above 0.8 is considered meritorious, the result strengthens the reliability of the data. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was found to be significant (Chi-Square = 3689.919, DF=210, Sig. = 0.000), demonstrating that the correlations among items are sufficiently strong and not random. Collectively, these outcomes validate the appropriateness of conducting exploratory factor analysis to uncover the underlying dimensions related to green jobs and their role in sustainable development.

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
Adoption of green jobs has enhanced operational efficiency.	1.000	.876
Green employment initiatives created access to new markets and consumer segments.	1.000	.877
Synergy benefits such as cost savings and resource sharing were realized through green jobs.	1.000	.893
Green job initiatives contributed to improved organizational profitability.	1.000	.822
There was a noticeable increase in community and stakeholder value due to green employment.	1.000	.774
Employee roles and responsibilities were clearly redefined in the transition to green jobs.	1.000	.577
Green job practices resulted in more effective governance and decision-making.	1.000	.818

Implementation of green jobs was based on well-defined strategic sustainability goals.	1.000	.841
Green jobs were supported by complementary business and environmental strengths.	1.000	.843
Key performance indicators such as efficiency and return on investment improved with green employment.	1.000	.763
The organization's growth and resilience improved through sustainable job practices.	1.000	.813
Stakeholders responded positively to the adoption of green job initiatives.	1.000	.583
Investors and stakeholders showed increased confidence in organizations adopting green jobs.	1.000	.822
Expectations of employees and stakeholders were met or exceeded through green employment strategies.	1.000	.823
Green jobs enhanced the organization's reputation in sustainability and industry leadership.	1.000	.861
Green employment practices helped reduce the organization's exposure to environmental and financial risks.	1.000	.633
The financial position of the organization remained stable or improved through green jobs.	1.000	.725
Stakeholders were informed of potential risks associated with the transition to green jobs.	1.000	.806
Green jobs diversified the organization's revenue base and reduced over-dependence on single segments.	1.000	.767
Integration of sustainable systems and processes was smooth and timely.	1.000	.813
Leadership alignment contributed positively to the success of green job initiatives.	1.000	.769

The communalities table indicates the proportion of each variable's variance that can be explained by the extracted factors. All items initially had a value of 1.000, representing total variance. The extracted communalities range from .577 to .893, showing that a substantial portion of variance for each item is explained by the factor solution. Notably,

statements like "Synergy benefits were realized postmerger" and "Access to new markets" show high extraction values of .893 and .877, respectively, indicating strong relevance. Even the lowest value, .577 for "Employee roles redefined", is acceptable. This confirms that the majority of items contribute well to the overall factor structure.

	Total Variance Explained								
Component	In	itial Eigenval	ues	Extracti	on Sums of Squa	ared Loadings	R	otation Sums of S	quared Loadings
Component	Total 9	% of Variance	Cumulative	% Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.733	36.822	36.822	7.733	36.822	36.822	4.235	20.164	20.164
2	3.204	15.256	52.078	3.204	15.256	52.078	3.157	15.033	35.197
3	2.052	9.774	61.851	2.052	9.774	61.851	3.105	14.786	49.983
4	1.941	9.245	71.096	1.941	9.245	71.096	3.082	14.676	64.659
5	1.568	7.469	78.565	1.568	7.469	78.565	2.920	13.907	78.565
6	.628	2.992	81.558						
7	.563	2.681	84.238						
8	.507	2.413	86.651						
9	.405	1.929	88.580						
10	.362	1.722	90.302						
11	.319	1.519	91.821						
12	.277	1.321	93.143						
13	.243	1.156	94.298						
14	.235	1.117	95.415						
15	.204	.972	96.387						
16	.200	.951	97.338						
17	.158	.754	98.093						
18	.140	.665	98.758						
19	.123	.584	99.342						
20	.071	.337	99.679					<u> </u>	_
21	.067	.321	100.000						

The Total Variance Explained table summarizes the results of Principal Component Analysis. Initially, five components have eigenvalues greater than 1, indicating they are significant. These five components explain a cumulative variance of 78.565%, which is considered highly satisfactory for social science research.

The first component accounts for 36.822% of the variance alone, showing its strong influence. After rotation (which helps in better interpretation), the variance is more evenly

distributed: Component 1 explains 20.164%, Component 2 explains 15.033%, Component 3 explains 14.786%, Component 4 explains 14.676%, and Component 5 explains 13.907%.

This redistribution reflects clearer and more balanced factor loadings. Thus, the data structure is well captured by five distinct and meaningful components, supporting the construct validity of the questionnaire.

Rotated Component Matrix						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	
Adoption of green jobs has enhanced operational efficiency.	.875					
Green employment initiatives created access to new markets and consumer segments.	.869					
Synergy benefits such as cost savings and resource sharing were realized through green jobs.	.867					
Green job initiatives contributed to improved organizational profitability.	.862					
There was a noticeable increase in community and stakeholder value due to green employment.	.815					
Employee roles and responsibilities were clearly redefined in the transition to green jobs.		.898				
Green job practices resulted in more effective governance and decision-making.		.897				

.874			
.871			
	.876		
	.873		
	.850		
	.718		
		.896	
		.886	
		.796	
		.738	
			.866
		Ì.	.856
			.821
			.627
		.873 .850 .718	.871 .876 .873 .850 .718 .896 .886 .796 .738

The role of green jobs in contributing to sustainable development can be examined across five major factors. The first is Operational and Market Efficiency, where the adoption of green practices enhances productivity, improves resource utilization, and opens access to new markets and consumer segments. The second factor, Profitability and Financial Stability, highlights how green jobs strengthen an organization's financial base by improving profitability, ensuring stability, reducing environmental and financial risks, and diversifying revenue streams. The third factor, Governance and Strategic Alignment, emphasizes that successful implementation of green jobs requires clear sustainability goals, effective governance structures, and alignment of leadership, supported by complementary business strengths. The fourth factor, Employee and Stakeholder Engagement, reflects how green jobs redefine employee roles, build stakeholder trust, and ensure risks are

communicated transparently. Finally, Reputation and Investor Confidence underlines how green employment initiatives enhance an organization's brand image, build community goodwill, and attract investor confidence. Together, these five factors demonstrate that green jobs not only promote environmental responsibility but also strengthen organizational growth and long-term sustainable development.

### **Factors**

- Operational and Market Efficiency
- Profitability and Financial Stability
- Governance and Strategic Alignment
- Employee and Stakeholder Engagement
- Reputation and Investor Confidence

Component Transformation Matrix								
Component	1	2	3	4	5			
1	.643	.028	.450	.425	.451			
2	.006	.980	015	170	.106			
3	493	.170	.242	.771	275			
4	.064	.023	836	.421	.344			
5	583	101	.199	139	.769			

The Component Transformation Matrix shows the correlations among the rotated components after Varimax rotation in factor analysis. Each value reflects how much a component contributes to another. For example, Component 1 shares moderate correlations with Components 3, 4, and 5, suggesting some overlap in the underlying constructs. However, Component 2 is highly distinct (loading 0.980 on itself), indicating it represents a unique factor. Overall, the rotation achieved a clearer separation and better interpretability of the five extracted factors.

# Findings and Discussion

- Concept and Scope of Green Jobs: Green jobs are spread across diverse industries, including renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste management, eco-friendly construction, and environmental conservation. They focus on reducing emissions, conserving resources, and improving efficiency while ensuring decent employment.
- Contribution to Economic Development: Green jobs stimulate new industries and markets, particularly in renewable energy and energy efficiency. For example, the renewable energy sector employed more than 12 million people globally by 2022. In countries like India,

- solar and wind projects have generated large-scale employment, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and boosting economic resilience.
- Contribution to Social Development: Green jobs improve livelihoods by ensuring fair wages, inclusivity, and skill development. Programs in sustainable agriculture and recycling have empowered rural communities, women, and youth. For example, in Africa, organic farming initiatives not only provide jobs but also address food security and poverty reduction.
- Contribution to Environmental Sustainability: Green jobs directly reduce environmental degradation. They promote clean energy, conservation of natural resources, and pollution control. In Europe, circular economy initiatives have created thousands of jobs in recycling industries, significantly lowering carbon footprints.

#### Recommendations

- Skill Development and Education: Establish specialized vocational and academic programs in renewable energy, eco-agriculture, and waste management.
- Policy and Incentives: Governments should provide

- subsidies, tax relief, and funding to support green industries.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations can boost investment and technology transfer.
- **Awareness and Engagement:** Promote awareness among workers and employers about the benefits of green employment.
- **Decent Work Standards:** Ensure green jobs adhere to labor rights, gender inclusivity, and safe working conditions.
- **Integration with SDGs:** Align green job initiatives with global development goals for wider impact.

#### Conclusion

Green jobs represent a vital pathway toward achieving sustainable development. They bridge economic prosperity with environmental responsibility and social equity. By fostering innovation, reducing carbon emissions, empowering marginalized groups, and creating resilient economies, green jobs contribute significantly to global sustainability efforts.

However, the challenges of skill shortages, policy gaps, and financial barriers must be addressed through comprehensive strategies. Strengthened education, supportive policies, and multi-stakeholder collaboration can ensure that green jobs become the foundation of a sustainable future. In conclusion, investing in green jobs is not only a solution for present challenges but also an investment in a fairer, cleaner, and more resilient world for future generations.

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