

# Estonian Vocational Education:

## A 20-Year Journey Aligned with EU Goals

Rita Kask  
Inga Kukk

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education  
estonia



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
AND RESEARCH



# ReferNet Estonia

- + Strong cooperation between the ReferNet team in the Analysis Division and the national representative in the VET Division of the Ministry of Education and Research
- + Cedefop/ReferNet resources are of most use when closely aligned with policy development
- + Direct contributions from national policymakers and inputs to policy development
- + For a small country, a broader perspective and other countries' experiences provide added value

# Characteristics

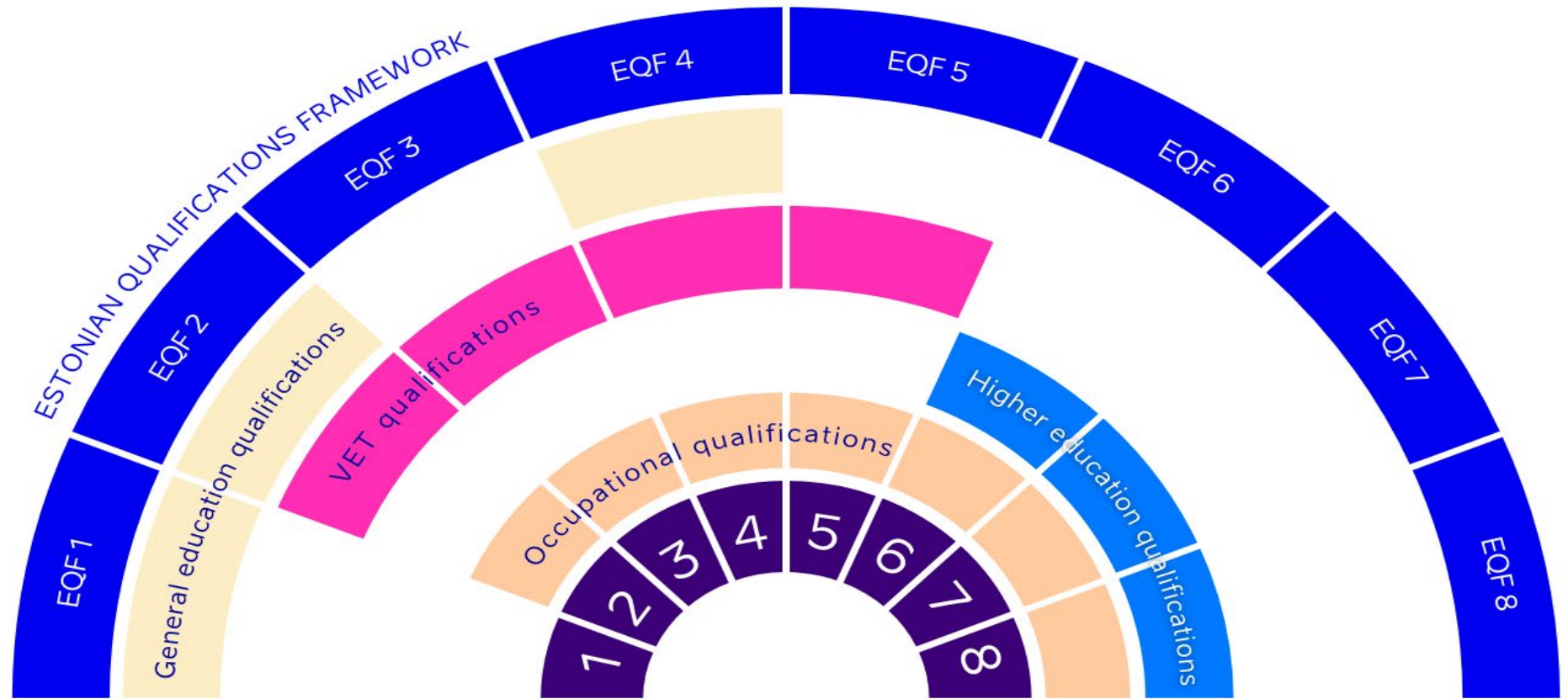
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- A person in a yellow shirt and white pants is standing in a warehouse aisle, reaching up to a high shelf to retrieve a box. The shelves are filled with various boxes and containers. The background is a blue-tinted image of the warehouse interior.
- + Access to VET programmes and additional training is free for all ages currently (will be changed soon).
  - + With over 130 specialities to choose from, Estonian vocational education offers a comprehensive range of options.
  - + Flexible study formats offer wide range of possibilities, including full-time, part-time, and distance learning.
  - + High autonomy of VET schools
  - + The state has special initiative (OSKA) to FORECAST FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS by analysing the labour market.
  - + A significant part of initial VET is WORK-BASED, allowing students to better prepare for the job market.
  - + Close COOPERATION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR provides students real workplace experience.

# Legal framework

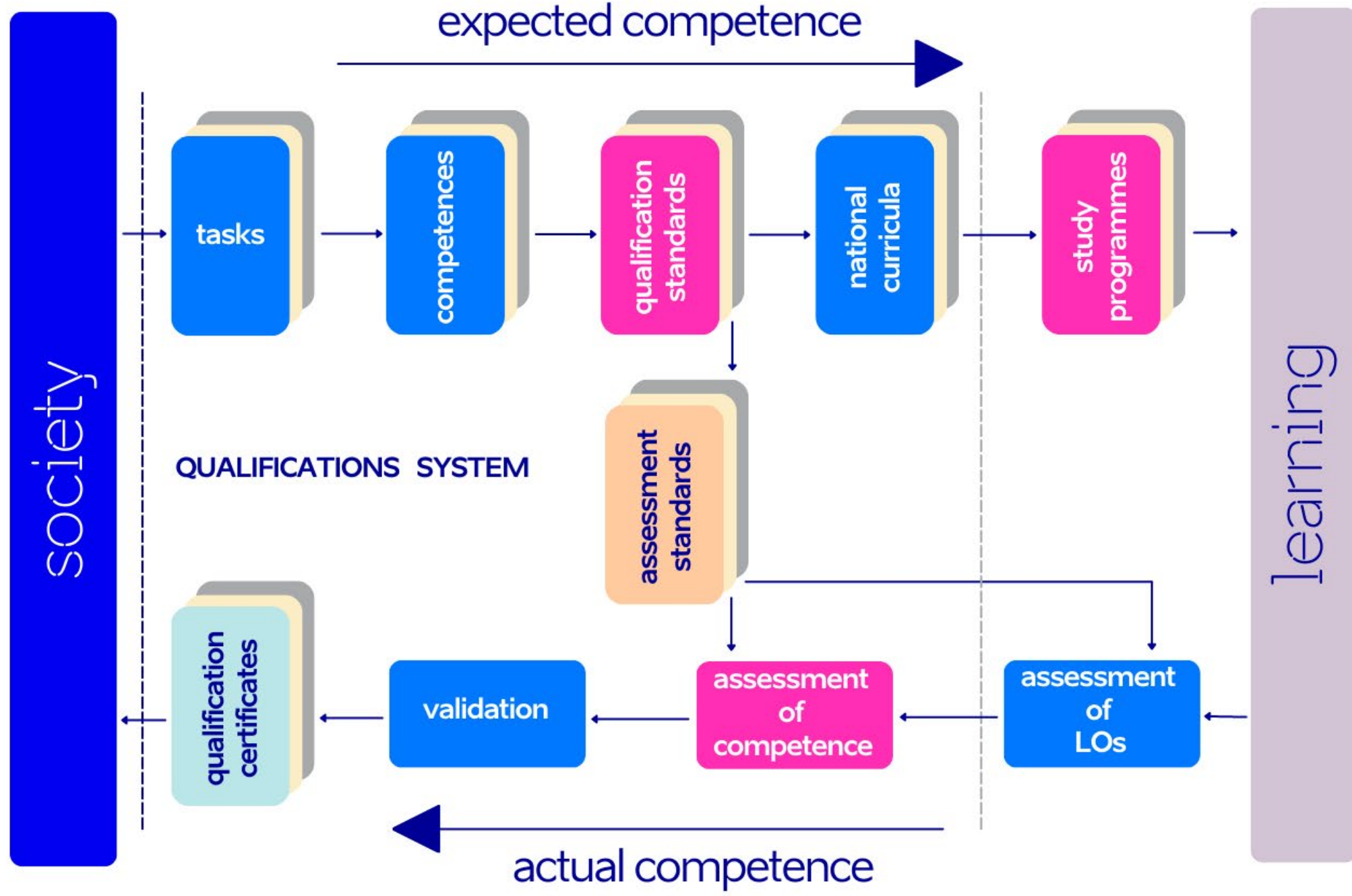
- + [Vocational Educational Institutions Act](#)
- + [Standard of Vocational Education](#)
- + National Curricula, EstQF 4, upper secondary VET, Ministerial regulations
- + [ISCED F-2013](#)
- + professional standards

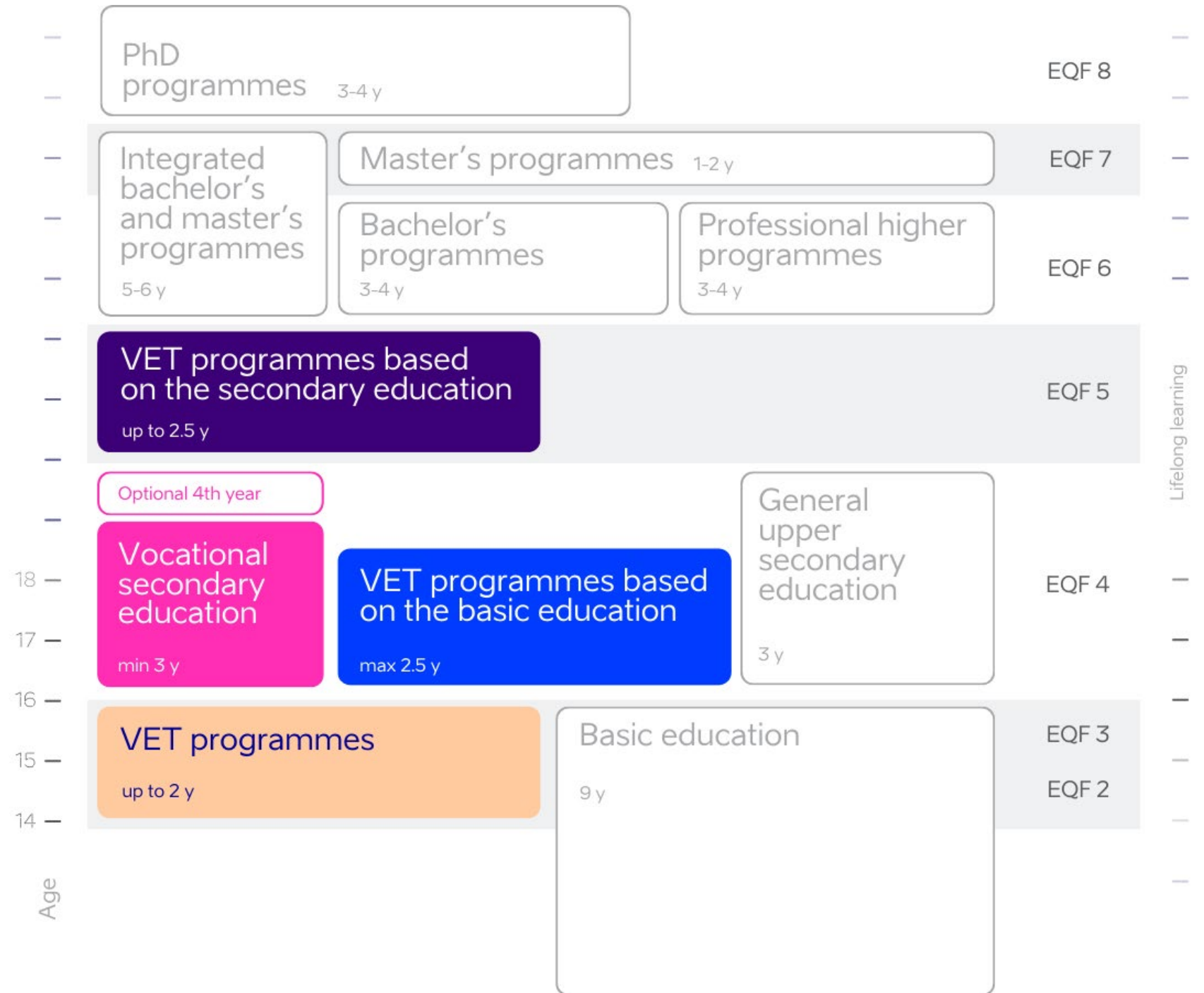


# VET curricula are directly driven by professional standards.



# Competence circle





# Timeline

## 1996 – 2000 Vocational Education System Development Plan

- national qualification system, professional standards development
- agreement between MoER and social partners
- reforming the content of VET
- piloted modular learning
- curricula development
- changed qualification requirements for school leaders and teachers
- reorganised school's network

## Development of the vocational education system in 2001–2004 and 2005-2008

- focus on **apprenticeships**, legislation and piloting in 16 schools and 180 enterprises
- qualification system, professional standards and pilots of qualification exams
- EQF , ECVET and Europass, Recognition of Prior Learning
- Renewing Estonian Education Database about gathering VET data

Surveys in cooperation with Estonian Statistics and Eurostat

## Estonian Vocational Education System Development Plan 2009-2013

New law, new VET types and curricula directly connected with levels EstQF

Learning outcome based curricula, assessment changed

5th level studies in VET

Estonian VET Credit point implemented

Implementing EQAVET principles - Quality assurance model, legislation, implementing

# Challenges

- + The share of 18 to 24-year-olds with low educational attainment not in education or training (%) is high (9,8%)
- + The drop-out rate from VET is high
- + The share of low-achievers is much higher among boys than girls and fewer boys complete secondary education
- + Differing paths in secondary education are not equally valued – do we need common upper secondary education standard?
- + The supply of the next generation's qualified teachers, vocational teachers and support specialists is insufficient

# New! Vocational Education Reform 2024-...

**Aim – vocational secondary education is a competitive alternative to the general secondary education, updated concept of vocational education**

**More choices after graduation of VET and skill-set that lasts longer!**

- + CURRICULUM REFORM: extended study period, new concept for secondary education studies, strengthened focus on transversal skills, broad-based curricula with individual learning pathways, skills demonstrations, etc
- + SCHOOL NETWORK REFORM: establishing regional education centers to provide wide-range of learning pathways, competence-based division of schools, new funding mechanisms, etc.
- + NEW VET LAW: in 2024 changes in current law to start reforms, new VET Law for 2027 to perpetuate the new concept.

# Thank You!

rita.kask@hm.ee

inga.kukk@hm.ee

[educationestonia.org/vet](http://educationestonia.org/vet)

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